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THE SCHOOL OF POETRY

THE SCHOOL OF POETRY

Chosen for Young Readers by

ALICE MEYNELL



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INTRODUCTION

THE ages suggested for the Scholars of this little School were ten to fourteen. These are long, long years of youth, equal to ten of the older, twenty of the aged : not only in effectiveness, but also in the sensation of time. Therefore it was not easy to choose the all-appropriate from our great and various literature. Something there might always be for fourteen to tolerate and yet for ten to hope to achieve. I have taken some poems for their happy, courageous, and honourable thought, some for the very poetry of poetry. At the head of most of the pieces is a little fingerpost pointing to the quality. The size of the book was, of course, limited ; there would have been matter, from the stores of past and present, for fifty such books.

A. M.

September, 1922.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Sir Patrick Spens	<i>Anonymous</i>	13
Agincourt	<i>Michael Drayton</i>	17
Under the Greenwood Tree	<i>Shakespeare</i>	21
Hark, hark, the lark !	<i>Shakespeare</i>	22
Funeral Song	<i>Shakespeare</i>	22
Come unto these yellow sands	<i>Shakespeare</i>	23
Jog on !	<i>Shakespeare</i>	24
Over hill, over dale	<i>Shakespeare</i>	24
Titania	<i>Shakespeare</i>	25
O sweet content !	<i>Thomas Dekker</i>	26
An Epitaph	<i>Ben Jonson</i>	27
Growth	<i>Ben Jonson</i>	28
The Right Greyhound	<i>Old Rhyme</i>	28
Farewell, Rewards and Fairies	<i>Richard Corbet</i>	29
Tombs in Westminster Abbey	<i>Francis Beaumont</i>	30
To Live Merrily and to Trust to Good Verses	<i>Robert Herrick</i>	31
To Meadows	<i>Robert Herrick</i>	33
A Thanksgiving	<i>Robert Herrick</i>	34
The Elixir	<i>George Herbert</i>	36
Virtue	<i>George Herbert</i>	38
The Pulley	<i>George Herbert</i>	39

		PAGE
The Search for Peace	<i>George Herbert</i>	40
Man's Medley	<i>George Herbert</i>	41
Equality	<i>James Shirley</i>	42
A Hymn of the Nativity	<i>Richard Crashaw</i>	43
On his Blindness	<i>John Milton</i>	48
Epitaph on Denis Rolle	<i>Thomas Fuller</i>	49
The Grasshopper	<i>Abraham Cowley</i>	49
The Pilgrim	<i>John Bunyan</i>	51
The Nymph complaining for the Death of her Fawn	<i>Andrew Marvell</i>	52
The Garden	<i>Andrew Marvell</i>	55
On Cromwell's Return from Ireland	<i>Andrew Marvell</i>	57
The Retreat	<i>Henry Vaughan</i>	62
The World of Light	<i>Henry Vaughan</i>	63
Morning	<i>Henry Vaughan</i>	65
Peace	<i>Henry Vaughan</i>	66
The Salutation	<i>Thomas Traherne</i>	67
Wonder	<i>Thomas Traherne</i>	69
The Loss of the <i>Royal George</i>	<i>William Cowper</i>	71
The Woodman's Dog	<i>William Cowper</i>	73
Tom Bowling	<i>Charles Dibdin</i>	73
The Piper	<i>William Blake</i>	74
Night	<i>William Blake</i>	75
Of England	<i>William Blake</i>	77
The Land of Dreams	<i>William Blake</i>	78
The Lamb	<i>William Blake</i>	79
Holy Thursday	<i>William Blake</i>	80
The Tiger	<i>William Blake</i>	81

Contents

9

PAGE

To a Field Mouse	<i>Robert Burns</i>	82
Lochinvar	<i>Sir Walter Scott</i>	84
Helvellyn	<i>Sir Walter Scott</i>	86
To Daffodils	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	88
The Inner Shrine	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	89
On Westminster Bridge	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	89
The Solitary Reaper	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	90
On the Subjugation of Switzerland	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	91
The Pet Lamb	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	92
The Last of the Flock	<i>William Wordsworth</i>	97
Ye Mariners of England	<i>Thomas Campbell</i>	100
The Water-Snakes	<i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i>	102
Sleep	<i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i>	102
A wet sheet and a flowing sea	<i>Allan Cunningham</i>	103
The Isles of Greece	<i>Lord Byron</i>	104
The Nosegay	<i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>	106
Spirit of Delight	<i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>	108
The Thrush's Nest	<i>John Clare</i>	110
To a Waterfowl	<i>William Cullen Bryant</i>	111
On First Looking into Chapman's <i>Homer</i>	<i>John Keats</i>	112
To Autumn	<i>John Keats</i>	113
La Belle Dame Sans Merci	<i>John Keats</i>	114
The Robin's Cross	<i>George Darley</i>	116
Epitaph on a Jacobite	<i>Lord Macaulay</i>	117
The Cry of the Children	<i>Elizabeth Barrett Browning</i>	118
The Romance of the Swan's Nest	<i>Elizabeth Barrett Browning</i>	124
The Brook	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	128

		PAGE
Echo Song	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	130
Morte d'Arthur	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	131
Ulysses	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	140
Sir Galahad	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	142
St. Agnes' Eve	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	144
The Dying Swan	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	146
From <i>In Memoriam</i>	<i>Lord Tennyson</i>	147
Home Thoughts, from the Sea	<i>Robert Browning</i>	148
Hervé Riel	<i>Robert Browning</i>	149
The Loss of the <i>Birken- head</i>	<i>Sir F. Hastings Doyle</i>	155
A High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire	<i>Jean Ingelow</i>	157
The Forsaken Merman	<i>Matthew Arnold</i>	163
Keith of Ravelston	<i>Sydney Dobell</i>	168
The Year's Round	<i>Coventry Patmore</i>	170
The Phases of the Moon	<i>Christina Rossetti</i>	171
Forever	<i>Charles Stuart Calverley</i>	171
The Schoolmaster Abroad with his Son	<i>Charles Stuart Calverley</i>	173
The Walrus and the Carpenter	<i>Lewis Carroll</i>	175
Vespers	<i>Thomas Edward Brown</i>	179
The Laugh	<i>Thomas Edward Brown</i>	179
Battle-hymn of the Republic	<i>Julia Ward Howe</i>	180
Song of the Soldiers	<i>Thomas Hardy</i>	182
Pro Rege Nostro	<i>William Ernest Henley</i>	184
"Over the Sea to Skye"	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i>	186
As Happy as Kings	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i>	186

Contents

II

		PAGE
The Sick Child	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i>	187
Don Quixote	<i>Austin Dobson</i>	188
The Reaper	<i>John Banister Tabb</i>	189
God's Likeness	<i>John Banister Tabb</i>	190
Holy Ground	<i>John Banister Tabb</i>	190
"Mammy"	<i>John Banister Tabb</i>	191
The Brook	<i>John Banister Tabb</i>	191
Going Down-hill on a Bicycle	<i>Dean Beeching</i>	192
Prayers	<i>Dean Beeching</i>	193
The Country Faith	<i>Norman Gale</i>	194
Lines: (sent with a copy of "Robin" Herrick's Poems)	<i>Edmund Gosse</i>	194
Daisy	<i>Francis Thompson</i>	195
July Fugitive	<i>Francis Thompson</i>	198
At Lord's Cricket-ground	<i>Francis Thompson</i>	200
Last Words over a Little Bed at Night	<i>Sara M. B. Piatt</i>	201
Self-comforted	<i>Sara M. B. Piatt</i>	202
Indian Fevers	<i>Sir Ronald Ross</i>	203
The Joys of the Road	<i>Bliss Carman</i>	204
Lambs	<i>Katharine Tynan Hinkson</i>	207
St. Francis to the Birds	<i>Katharine Tynan Hinkson</i>	209
Recessional	<i>Rudyard Kipling</i>	212
The Scribe	<i>Walter de la Mare</i>	213
The Listerers	<i>Walter de la Mare</i>	214
The Donkey	<i>Gilbert K. Chesterton</i>	216
Song of the Dog "Quoodle"	<i>Gilbert K. Chesterton</i>	217
Music	<i>Gilbert K. Chesterton</i>	218
The Windmill	<i>Edward Verrall Lucas</i>	219

		PAGE
For the Fallen	<i>Laurence Binyon</i>	220
The Torch of Life	<i>Sir Henry Newbolt</i>	222
Dominion	<i>John Drinkwater</i>	223
Sherwood	<i>Alfred Noyes</i>	224
The Frog	<i>Hilaire Belloc</i>	227
The Vulture	<i>Hilaire Belloc</i>	228
The Gnu	<i>Hilaire Belloc</i>	228
Four-Paws	<i>Helen Parry Eden</i>	229
To My Daughter	<i>Helen Parry Eden</i>	231
The Ship	<i>John Collins Squire</i>	232
The Sleeping Sea	<i>John Freeman</i>	233
The Bells of Heaven	<i>Ralph Hodgson</i>	234
Stupidity Street	<i>Ralph Hodgson</i>	235
Forefathers	<i>Edmund Blunden</i>	236
The Shepherdess	<i>Alice Meynell</i>	238
A Hymn	<i>Gilbert K. Chesterton</i>	239

The School of Poetry

SIR PATRICK SPENS

A story of shipwreck and misfortune in which the writer tells things as though he saw them, and reports conversation as though he heard it. There is a curious noble cheerfulness about loss and bravery that is seldom known to poetry. This may seem rather unfeeling to some. But this is not a dirge ; it is a heroic song. It has many variants, and this version is that given by Sir Walter Scott in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

THE king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine :
" O whare will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this new ship of mine ? "

O up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee :
" Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sail'd the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter,
And seal'd it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

" To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem ;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
Sae loud, loud laughed he ;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his e'e.

" O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out, at this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea ?

" Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem ;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn,
Wi' a' the speed they may ;
They hae landed in Noroway,
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week
In Noroway but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say :

" Ye Scottishmen spend a' our king's goud,
And a' our queenis fee."
" Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud !
Fu' loud I hear ye lie !

" For I brought as much white monie
As gane my men and me,
And I brought a half-fou' o' gude red goud,
Out o'er the sea wi' me.

"Mak ready, mak ready, my merry-men a' !
Our gude ship sails the morn."

"Ncw ever alack, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm !

"I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm ;
And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm."

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew
loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the top-masts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm ;
And the waves cam ower the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

"O where will I get a gude sailor,
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
To see if I can spy land ? "

"O here am I, a sailor gude,
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall top-mast ;
But I fear you'll ne'er spy land."

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a boult flew out of our goodly ship,
And the salt sea it came in.

"Gae, fetch a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side,
And let na the sea come in."

They fetch'd a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapped them roun that gude ship's
side,
But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
To weet their cork-heel'd shoon!
But lang or a' the play was play'd
They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather-bed
That floated on the faem,
And mony was the gude lord's son
That never mair cam hame.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,
The maidens tore their hair,
A' for the sake of their true loves,—
For them they'll see na mair.

O lang, lang may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
Wi' their goud kalms in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see na mair.

O forty miles off Aberdeen,
'Tis fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

AGINCOURT

This poem is a boast, but a splendid boast. To despise the enemy, to call them "the false French" and "peasants," when "peasant" was strangely a word of contempt, is not according to our ideal of war; but the life and energy of the poem are grand. The metre is seldom or never used now. Be sure, in reading it, to give four stresses or beats to the three long lines; don't read them trippingly, in triplets. If learners of music, think of crotchets.

FAIR stood the wind for France
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnish'd in warlike sort,
Marcheth tow'rd's Agincourt
In happy hour;

Skirmishing day by day
 With those that stopp'd his way,
 Where the French general lay
 With all his power.

.

And turning to his men,
 Quoth our brave Henry then,
 "Though they to one be ten
 Be not amazèd :
 Yet have we well begun ;
 Battles so bravely won
 Have ever to the sun
 'By fame been raisèd.

" And for myself (quoth he)
 This my full rest shall be .
 England ne'er mourn for me
 Nor more esteem me :
 Victor I will remain
 Or on this earth lie slain ;
 Never shall she sustain
 Loss to redeem me.

" Poitiers and Cressy tell,
 When most their pride did swell,
 Under our swords they fell :
 No less our skill is
 Than when our grandsire great,
 Claiming the regal scat,
 By many a warlike feat
 Lopp'd the French lilies."

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vaward led ;
With the main Henry sped
 Among his henchmen.
Excester had the rear,
A braver man not there ;
O Lord, how hot they were
 On the false Frenchmen !

They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
 To hear was wonder ;
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake :
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
 Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
 To our hid forces !
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly
The English archery
 Stuck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long
That like to serpents stung,
 Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts
 Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbos drew,
And on the French they flew,
 Not one was tardy ;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went--
 Our men were hardy.

This while our noble king,
His broadsword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding
 As to o'erwhelm it ;
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
 Bruisèd his helmet.

Gloster, that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood
 With his brave brother ;
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
 Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made
 Still as they ran up ;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
 Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
 To England to carry.
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
 Such a King Harry?

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Love of the country. Modern people speak often of their love of Nature, but the true love of country life—rough and smooth—is not modern.

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
 Here shall he see
 No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
 Here shall he see
 No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

SHAKESPEARE.

HARK, HARK, THE LARK!

This song is as fresh as the morning. Later you will find a Tennyson poem for a much earlier hour—the mysterious dawn. There is no dark thing in this bit of Shakespeare. The following “Funeral Song” is a song of peace, but it burrows in the earth, as the next dances on the edge of the waves.

HARK, hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
 And Phœbus 'gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies ;
 And winking Mary-buds begin
 To ope their golden eyes :
 With everything that pretty bin,
 My lady sweet, arise !
 Arise, arise !

SHAKESPEARE.

FUNERAL SONG

FEAR no more the heat o' the sun,
 Nor the furious winter's rages ;
 Thou thy worldly task hast done,
 Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages :
 Golden lads and girls all must,
 As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
 Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;
 Care no more to clothe and eat ;
 To thee the reed is as the oak :

The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
Fear not slander, censure rash ;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

SHAKESPEARE.

COME UNTO THESE YELLOW SANDS

COME unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands :
Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd,
The wild waves whist,
Foot it featly here and there ;
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.

Hark, hark !

Bow-wow.

The watch-dogs bark !

Bow-wow.

Hark, hark ! I hear

The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry Cock-a-diddle-dow.

SHAKESPEARE.

JOG ON!

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a :
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

SHAKESPEARE.

OVER HILL, OVER DALE

I have not gathered many fairy poems into this collection, because fairies became rather a commonplace of poetry, the result of a ready-made kind of fancy. But Shakespeare has a right to his fairies because of his lovely fresh imagination.

OVER hill, over dale
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere ;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be :
In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours :
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

SHAKESPEARE.

TITANIA

FIRST FAIRY

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
Newts, and blind-worms, do no wrong ;
Come not near our Fairy Queen.

Chorus

Philomel with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby !
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh !
So good-night, with lullaby.

SECOND FAIRY

Weaving spiders, come not here ;
Hence you long-legg'd spinners hence !
Beetles black, approach not near :
Worm, nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus

Philomel with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby !
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh !
So good-night, with lullaby.

SHAKESPEARE.

O SWEET CONTENT!

Among many active virtues rightly admired in our day, there is one virtue that finds small favour. But Content is not a tame or feeble thing in the fine energy of this poem.

ART thou poor, and hast thou golden slumbers ?

O sweet content !

Art thou rich, and is thy mind perplexed ?

O punishment !

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed

To add to golden numbers, golden numbers ?

O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;

Honest labour bears a lovely face ;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny !

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring ?

O sweet content !

Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own
tears ?

O punishment !

Then he that patiently want's burden bears

No burden bears, but is a king, a king !

O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;

Honest labour bears a lovely face ;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny !

THOMAS DEKKER.

AN EPITAPH

ON SALATHIEL PAVY
A CHILD OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S CHAPEL

Ben Jonson's grief for this child's death is very tender and real, but it is true grief at play. In the following poem, *Growth*, there is also that fine old sense of place and proportion.

WEEP with me, all you that read
This little story ;
And know, for whom a tear you shed,
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature
As Heaven and Nature seem'd to strive
Which own'd the creature.
Years he number'd scarce thirteen
When Fates turn'd cruel ;
Yet three fill'd zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel ;
And did act (what now we moan)
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcæ thought him one,
He play'd so truly.
So by error to his fate
They all consented ;
But viewing him since, alas ! too late
They have repented ;
And have sought, to give new birth,
In baths to steep him ;
But being so much too good for Earth
Heaven vows to keep him.

BEN JONSON

GROWTH

It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk doth make man better be ;
 Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :
 A lily of a day
 Is fairer far in May,
 Although it fall and die that night—
 It was the plant and flower of light !
 In small proportions we just beauties see ;
 And in short measures life may perfect be.

BEN JONSON.

THE RIGHT GREYHOUND

Did our forefathers feel affection—I might say respect
 —for a dog ? We do, and the Greeks did, but this account
 of a greyhound's points is pure business.

If you would have a good tyke,
 Of which there are few like—
 He must be headed like a snake,
 Necked like a drake,
 Backed like a beam,
 Sided like a bream,
 Tailed like a bat,
 And footed like a cat.

OLD RHYME.

FAREWELL, REWARDS AND FAIRIES

We have perhaps found fairies a bore in poetry. Richard Corbet found them a disappointing race of people, but pretends to wish them back again.

FAREWELL rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say ;
For now foul sluts in dairies
Do fare as well as they.
And though they sweep their hearths
no less
Than maids were wont to do,
Yet who of late for cleanliness
Finds sixpence in her shoe ?

At morning and at evening both
You merry were and glad,
So little care of sleep or sloth
These pretty ladies had ;
When Tom came home from labour,
Or Cis to milking rose,
Then merrily, merrily went their tabor,
And nimbly went their toes.

Witness those rings and roundelays
Of theirs, which yet remain,
Were footed in Queen Mary's days
On many a grassy plain ;
But since of late Elizabeth
And, later, James came in,
They never danced on any heath
As when the time hath been.

By which we note the fairies
 Were of the old profession ·
 Their songs were Ave Mary's,
 Their dances were procession :
 But now, alas ! they all are dead,
 Or gone beyond the seas,
 Or farther for religion fled,
 Or else they take their ease.

A tell-tale in their company
 They never could endure,
 And whoso kept not secretly
 Their mirth, was punish'd sure ;
 It was a just and Christian deed
 To pinch such black and blue :
 O how the commonwealth doth need
 Such justices as you ! . . .

RICHARD CORBET.

TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

This poem says very plain and self-evident things, but says them nobly.

MORTALITY, behold and fear !
 What a change of flesh is here !
 Think how many royal bones
 Sleep within this heap of stones :
 Here they lie had realms and lands,
 Who now want strength to stir their hands :
 Where from their pulpits seal'd with dust
 They preach, " In greatness is no trust."
 Here's an acre sown indeed

With the richest royal'st seed
That the earth did e'er suck in,
Since the first man died for sin :
Here the bones of birth have cried
" Though gods they were, as men they died."
Here are sands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings ;
Here's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

TO LIVE MERRILY AND TO TRUST TO GOOD VERSES

These jolly verses may profit all boys and girls, even those who now know less of Greece and Rome than they will later. England also has had her "golden pomp" of poetry.

Now is the time for mirth,
Nor cheek or tongue be dumb ;
For, with the flowery earth,
The golden pomp is come.

The golden pomp is come :
For now each tree does wear,
Made of her pap and gum,
Rich beads of amber here.

Now reigns the rose, and now
The Arabian dew besmears
My uncontrollèd brow
And my retorted hairs.

Homer, this health to thee !
In sack of such a kind
That it would make thee see
Though thou wert ne'er so blind.

Next, Virgil I'll call forth
To pledge this second health
In wine, whose each cup's worth
An Indian commonwealth.

A goblet next I'll drink
To Ovid, and suppose,
Made he the pledge, he'd think
The world had all one nose.

Then this immensive cup
Of aromatic wine,
Catullus, I quaff up
To that terse muse of thine.

Wild I am now with heat :
O Bacchus, cool thy rays !
Or, frantic, I shall eat
Thy thyrses and bite the bays.

Round, round the roof does run,
And, being ravish'd thus,
Come, I will drink a tun
To my Propertius.

Now, to Tibullus next :
This flood I drink to thee ;
But stay, I see a text
That this presents to me.

Behold, Tibullus lies
Here burnt, whose small return
Of ashes scarce suffice
To fill a little urn.

Trust to good verses then :
They only will aspire
When pyramids, as men,
Are lost i' the funeral fire.

And when all bodies meet
In Lethe to be drown'd,
Then only numbers swet
With endless life are crown'd.

ROBERT HERRICK

TO MEADOWS

London was very near meadows, and every one loved the country in Herrick's time. Why, London was nearly country.

YE have been fresh and green,
Ye have been fill'd with flowers,
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

You've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round;
Each virgin like a Spring,
With honeysuckles crown'd.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevel'd hair
Adorn'd this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown,
You're left here to lament
Your poor estates alone.

ROBERT HERRICK.

A THANKSGIVING

TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

The virtue of content we have noted as a little out of date in the modern world. Can the same thing be said of thankfulness?

LORD, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
And little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie,
Both soft and dry;
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard

Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
 Me, while I sleep.
Love is my porch, as is my fate,
 Both void of state ;
And yet the threshold of my door
 Is worn by the poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
 Good words or meat ;
Like as my parlour, so my hall
 And kitchen's small ;
A little buttery, and therein
 A little bin
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
 Unchipt, unflead.
Some little sticks of thorn or briar
 Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
 And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
 The pulse is Thine,
And all those other bits, that be
 There placed by Thee ;
The worts, the purslain, and the mess
 Of water-cress,
Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent ;
 And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet
 To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
 With guiltless mirth ;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
 Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand,
 That soils my land ;
And giv'st me for my bushel sown

Twice ten for one.
 Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
 Her egg each day ;
 Besides, my healthful ewes to bear
 Me twins each year,
 The while the conduits of my kine
 Run cream for wine.
 All these, and better, Thou dost send
 Me, to this end,
 That I should render, for my part,
 A thankful heart ;
 Which, fired with incense, I resign,
 As wholly Thine ;
 But the acceptance, that must be,
 My Christ, by Thee.

ROBERT HERRICK.

THE ELIXIR

We come, in Herbert, to a poet of great gravity, who yet lets his fancy play with his religious dutifulness. You will notice "his" for "its" "Its" is a pronoun not used in his day. *Virtue* (following) gave Ruskin, that great prophetic writer, the opportunity of an angry rebuke of the owners of land in a coal-mining part of England. He held that the beauty and labour of agriculture above-ground was far more precious than any black smoke-producing coal underground. I need not say that Herbert was not thinking of coal-mines. But Ruskin took symbols and parables wherever he could find them.

TEACH me, my God and King,
 In all things Thee to see,
 And what I do in anything,
 To do it as for Thee :

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action ;
But still to make Thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye ;
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of Thee partake :
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for Thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine :
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy 'laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold :
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told.

GEORGE HERBERT.

VIRTUE

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky :
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye :
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie :
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE PULLEY

The beauty of this great poem reaches a height in the magnificent last stanza. It is a pity that there should be two meanings to the word "rest"; but the reader will easily see where "rest" means "peace" and where it means the "remainder."

WHEN God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure :
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature :
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness ;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

SWEET Peace, where dost thou dwell? I
 humbly crave,
 Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
 And ask'd, if Peace were there?
A hollow wind did seem to answer, "No:
 "Go seek elsewhere."

I did; and going did a rainbow note:
 Surely, thought I,
This is the lace of Peace's coat:
 I will search out the matter.
But while I looked, the clouds immediately
 Did break and scatter.

Then went I to a garden, and did spy
 A gallant flower
The Crown Imperial: Sure, said I,
 Peace at the root must dwell.
But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devour
 What show'd so well.

At length I met a reverend good old man:
 Whom when for Peace
I did demand, he thus began:
 " There was a Prince of old
At Salem dwelt, who lived with good increase
 Of flock and fold.

" He sweetly lived; yet sweetness did not save
 His life from foes.
But after death, out of his grave

There sprang twelve stalks of wheat :
Which many wondering at, got some of those
To plant and set.

“ It prosper'd strangely, and did soon disperse
Th-ough all the earth :
For they that taste it do rehearse,
That virtue lies therein ;
A secret virtue, bringing peace and mirth
By flight of sin.

“ Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,
And grows for you ;
Make bread of it : and that repose
And peace, which evervwhere
With so much earnestness you do pursue,
Is only there.”

GEORGE HERBERT.

MAN'S MEDLEY

We have seen birds lift up their little beaks after
every good beakful of water. How prettily Herbert
takes the spiritual lesson !

HARK, how the birds do sing
And woods do ring !
All creatures have their joy, and man has his.
Yet if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter than at present is.
Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer ;

But as birds drink, and straight lift up their head,
So must he sip and think
Of better drink

He may attain to after he is dead.

Yet ev'n the greatest griefs
May be reliefs,

Could he but take them right and in their ways.

Happy is he whose heart

Hath found the art

To turn his double pains to double praise.

GEORGE HERBERT.

EQUALITY

More state and dignity may be in this than in Herbert's verse, but perhaps not so much impulse and passion.

THE glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against Fate ;
Death lays his icy hand on kings :
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;
But their strong nerves at last must yield :
They tame but one another still :
Early or late
They stoop to fate,

And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow :
Then boast no more your mighty deeds !
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the Victor-Victim bleeds !
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb :
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

A HYMN OF THE NATIVITY

SUNG BY THE SHEPHERDS

The Nativity of Christ was the subject of painting in all the great ages of Continental art. But it has not been so often dear to English poets. Crashaw, one of the greatest poets of the seventeenth century, has in perfection all the sweetness, the beauty, and the rather excessive love of decorative fancy that mark his age.

Chorus

COME, ye shepherds whose blest sight
Hath met Love's noon in Nature's night ;
Come lift we up our loftier song,
And wake the sun that lies too long.
To all our world of well-stol'n joy
He slept, and dreamt of no such thing,

While we found out Heav'ns fairer eye,
And kissed the cradle of our King;
Tell him he rises now too late
To show us aught worth looking at.

Tell him we now can show him more
Than he e'er showed to mortal sight,
Than he himself e'er saw before,
Which to be seen needs not his light :
Tell him, Tityrus, where th' hast been,
Tell him, Thyrsis, what th' hast seen.

Tityrus

Gloom, night embraced the place
Where the noble infant lay :
The babe looked up, and showed His face ;
In spite of darkness it was day.
It was Thy day, sweet, and did rise,
Not from the East, but from Thine eyes.

Chorus. It was Thy day, sweet, and did rise,
Not from the East, but from Thine eyes.

Thyrsis

Winter chid aloud, and sent
The angry North to wage his wars :
The North forgot his fierce intent,
And left perfumes instead of scars.
By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frosts he scattered flowers.

Chorus. By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frosts he scattered flowers.

Both

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day ;
We saw Thine eyes break from the East,
And chase the trembling shades away :
We saw Thee, and we blest the sight,
We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light.

Tityrus

Poor world, said I, what wilt thou do
To entertain this starry stranger ?
Is this the best thou canst bestow--
A cold and not too cleanly manger ?
Contend the powers of heaven and earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth.

Chorus. Contend the powers of heaven and earth
To fit a bed for this huge birth.

Thyrsis

Proud world, said I, cease your contest,
And let the mighty babe alone,
The phoenix builds the phoenix' nest,
Love's architecture is his own.
The babe whose birth embraves this morn,
Made His own bed ere He was born.

Chorus The babe, whose birth embraves this morn,
Made His own bed ere He was born.

Tityrus

I saw the curled drops, soft and slow,
Come hovering o'er the place's head,
Off'ring their whitest sheets of snow,
To furnish the fair infant's bed.
Forbear, said I, be not too bold,
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.

Thyrsis

I saw th' obsequious seraphim
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow,
For well they now can spare their wings,
Since Heaven itself lies here below.
Well done, said I; but are you sure
Your down, so warm, will pass for pure?
Chorus. Well done, said I; but are you sure
Your down, so warm, will pass for pure?

Both

No, no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose His royal head;
See, see how soon His new-bloomed cheek
'Twixt mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we; no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow!
Chorus. Sweet choice, said we; no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow!

Full Chorus

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter! day in night!

Chorus

Heaven in earth ! and God in man !
Great little one, whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to earth,

Welcome, tho' nor to gold, nor silk,
To more than Cæsar's birthright is ;
Two sister seas of virgin's milk,
With many a rarely-tempered kiss,
That breathes at once both maid and mother,
Warms in the one, cools in the other.

She sings Thy tears asleep, and dips
Her kisses in Thy weeping eye ;
She spreads the red leaves of Thy lips,
That in their buds yet blushing lie.
She 'gainst those mother diamonds tries
The points of her young eagle's eyes.

Welcome—tho' not to those gay flies,
Gilded i' th' beams of earthly kings,
Slippery souls in smiling eyes—
But to poor shepherds, homespun things,
Whose wealth's their flocks, whose wit's to be
Well read in their simplicity.

Yet, when young April's husband show'rs
Shall bless the fruitful Maia's bed,
We'll bring the first-born of her flowers,
To kiss Thy feet and crown Thy head.
To Thee, dread Lamb ! whose love must keep
The shepherds while they feed their sheep.

To Thee, meek Majesty, soft King
 Of simple graces and sweet loves !
 Each of us his lamb will bring,
 Each his pair of silver doves !
 At last, in fire of Thy fair eyes,
 Ourselves become our own best sacrifice !

RICHARD CRASHAW

ON HIS BLINDNESS

Milton is the most majestic of our poets. Therefore we admire him more when he is, as it were, pacing solemnly than when he is tripping "on the light fantastic toe," as in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (bad Italian—it should be "*penseroso*" !) and I do not think those two famous poems to be the best early lessons in poetry.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more
 bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he returning chide ;
 " Doth God exact day-labour, light-denied ? "
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, " God doth not need
 Either man's work, or his own gifts ; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best : his
 state

Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

JOHN MILTON.

EPITAPH ON DENIS ROLLE

With all the gravity and religious feeling of this poem, there is an ingenuity, a wit; the mingling is very seventeenth-century.

His earthly part within this tomb doth rest,
Who kept a court of honour in his breast ;
Birth, beauty, wit, and wisdom sat as Peers,
Till Death mistook his virtues for his years,
Or else Heaven envied Earth so rich a treasure,
Wherein too fine the ware, too scant the measure.
His mournful wife, her love to show in part,
This tomb built here ; a better in her heart.
Sweet Babe, his hopeful heir (Heaven grant this
 boon),
Live but so well ; but Oh ! die not so soon.

THOMAS FULLER.

THE GRASSHOPPER

The fancy here is charming. Note especially how Cowley makes the grasshopper landlord to the farmer. So many poets have praised the "song" of the grasshopper that one is almost sorry to remember that the "singing" is done with his legs rubbed together.

HAPPY Insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee ?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy morning's gentle wine !
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill ;

'Tis fill'd wherever thou dost tread,
Nature's self's thy Ganymed.
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king !
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee,
All that summer hours produce,
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plough :
Farmer he, and landlord thou !
Thou dost innocently joy ;
Nor does thy luxury destroy ;
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country hinds with gladness hear,
Prophet of the ripen'd year !
Thee Phœbus loves, and does inspire ;
Phœbus is himself thy sire.
To thee of all things upon earth,
Life is no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect, happy thou
Dost neither age nor winter know ;
But when thou'st drunk, and danced, and
 sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous, and wise withal,
Epicurean animal !)
Sated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

THE PILGRIM

This is not poetical poetry. But it is steadfast, sturdy, resolute and trudging, and as the kind of song that the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* did sing, it must interest us.

HE who would valiant be
 'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
 Follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
 To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound—
 His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
 To be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
Us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
 Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
 To be a pilgrim.

JOHN BUNYAN

THE NYMPH COMPLAINING FOR THE DEATH OF HER FAWN

When an English poet writes about a Nymph, he is playing at the child's game of "Let's pretend." And Marvell pretends charmingly, making no secret of the make-believe.

THE wanton troopers riding by
Have shot my fawn, and it will die.
Ungentle men! they cannot thrive
Who kill'd thee. Thou ne'er didst alive
Them any harm; alas! nor could
Thy death yet do them any good.
I'm sure I never wish'd them ill;
Nor do I for all this, nor will:
But, if my simple prayers may yet
Prevail with Heaven to forget
Thy murder, I will join my tears,
Rather than fail. But, O my fears!
It cannot die so. Heaven's King
Keeps register of everything,
And nothing may we use in vain;
Even beasts must be with justice slain,
Else men are made their deodands.
Though they should wash their guilty
hands
In this warm life-blood which doth part
From thine, and wound me to the heart,
Yet could they not be clean: their stain
Is dyed in such a purple grain.
There is not such another in
The world, to offer for their sin.
Unconstant Sylvio, when yet

I had not found him counterfeit,
One morning (I remember well),
Tied in this silver chain and bell,
Gave it to me : nay, and I know
What he said then, I'm sure I do :
Said he, " Look how your huntsman here
Hath taught a Fawn to hunt his Dear."
But Sylvio soon had me beguiled ;
This waxèd tame, while he grew wild,
And quite regardless of my smart,
Left me his Fawn, but took his Heart.
Thenceforth I set myself to play
My solitary time away
With this ; and very well content
Could so mine idle life have spent ;
For it was full of sport, and light
Of foot and heart, and did invite
Me to its game : it seem'd to bless
Itself in me ; how could I less
Than love it ? O, I cannot be
Unkind to a beast that loveth me.

With sweetest milk and sugar first
I it at my own fingers nursed ;
And as it grew, so every day
It wax'd more white and sweet than they.
It had so sweet a breath ! And oft
I blush'd to see its foot more soft
And white, shall I say than my hand ?
Nay, any lady's of the land.

It is a wondrous thing how fleet
'Twas on those little silver feet ;
With what a pretty skipping grace
It oft would challenge me the race ;
And, when't had left me far away,
'Twould stay, and run again, and stay

For it was nimbler much than hinds,
And trod as if on the four winds.

I have a garden of my own,
But so with roses overgrown,
And lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness ;
And all the spring-time of the year
It only lovèd to be there.
Among the beds of lilies I
Have sought it oft, where it should lie ;
Yet could not, till itself would rise,
Find it, although before mine eyes ;
For, in the flaxen lilies' shade,
It like a bank of lilies laid.
Upon the roses it would feed,
Until its lips e'en seem to bleed,
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,
And print those roses on my lip.
But all its chief delight was still
On roses thus itself to fill,
And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold :
Had it lived long, it would have been
Lilies without, roses within.

ANDREW MARVELL.

THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze,
To win' the palm, the oak, or bays ;
And their incessant labours see
Crowned from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow-vergèd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid ;
While all the flowers and trees do close,
To weave the garlands of repose !

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear ?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow ;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name :
Little, alas ! they know or heed,
How far these beauties hers exceed !
Fair trees ! wheres'e'er your bark I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have seen our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race ;

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow :
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead !
Ripe apples drop about my head ;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine ;
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach ;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness ;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find ;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas,
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide :
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings ;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walk'd without a mate !

After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet !
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there :
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers, and herbs, this dial new ;
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run,
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we !
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers ?

ANDREW MARVELL.

ON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND

An Horatian Ode

This is a great historic poem, and it has a noble proclamation of patriotism. Would that this patriotism had been less cruel ! Cromwell's dealing with the people of Ireland left just anger behind him, still alive in Irish hearts. The two stanzas on Charles the First, beginning "He nothing common did or mean," will be a long remembered passage of English poetry.

THE forward youth that would appear
Must now forsake his Muses dear,
Nor in the shadows sing
His numbers languishing :

'Tis time to leave the books in dust,
And oil the unused armour's rust,
 Removing from the wall
 The corselet of the hall.

So restless Cromwell could not cease
In the inglorious arts of peace,
 But through adventurous war
 Urgèd his active star ;

And like the three-fork'd lightning, first
Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,
 Did thorough his own side
 His fiery way divide :

(For 'tis all one to courage high,
The emulous, or enemy ;
 And with such, to enclose
 Is more than to oppose ;)

Then burning through the air he went,
And palaces and temples rent ;
 And Cæsar's head at last
 Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame
The force of angry Heaven's flame ;
 And if we would speak true,
 Much to the man is due,

Who, from his private gardens, where
He lived reservèd and austere
 (As if his highest plot
 To plant the bergamot),

Could by industrious valour climb
To ruin the great work of time,
And cast thy kingdoms old
Into another mould.

Though justice against Fate complain,
And plead the ancient rights in vain
(But those do hold or break
As men are strong or weak),

Nature, that hateth emptiness,
Allows of penetration less,
And therefore must make room
Where greater spirits come.

What field of all the civil war,
Where his were not the deepest scar ?
And Hampton shows what part
He had of wiser art ;

Where, twining subtle fears with hope
He wove a net of such a scope
That Charles himself might chase
To Carisbrooke's narrow case ;

That thence the royal actor borne,
The tragic scaffold might adorn :
While round the armed bands
Did clap their bloody hands.

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try ;

Nor call'd the gods, with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right ;
 But bow'd his comely head
 Down, as upon a bed.

This was that memorable hour
Which first assured the forcèd power :
 So, when they did design
 The Capitol's first line,

A bleeding head, where they begun,
Did fright the architects to run ;
 And yet in that the State
 Foresaw its happy fate.

And now the Irish are ashamed
To see themselves in one year tamed :
 So much one man can do
 That does both act and know.

They can affirm his praises best,
And have, though overcome, confest
 How good he is, how just
 And fit for highest trust.

Nor yet grown stiffer with command,
But still in the republic's hand—
 How fit he is to sway
 That can so well obey !—

He to the Commons' feet presents
A kingdom for his first year's rents,
 And, what he may, forbears
 His fame, to make it theirs :

And has his sword and spoils ungirt
To lay them at the public's skirt :
 So, when the falcon high
 Falls heavy from the sky,

She, having kill'd, no more doth search
But on the next green bough to perch ;
 Where, when he first does lure,
 The falconer has her sure.

What may not then our Isle presume
While victory his crest does plume ?
 What may not others fear
 If thus he crowns each year ?

As Cæsar, he, ere long, to Gaul,
To Italy a Hannibal,
 And to all States not free
 Shall climacteric be.

The Pict no shelter now shall find
Within his particolour'd mind,
 But from this valour sad
 Shrink underneath the plaid ;

Happy, if in the tufted brake
The English hunter him mistake,
 Nor lay his hounds in near
 The Caledonian deer.

But thou, the war's and fortune's son,
March indefatigably on ;
 And for the last effect,
 Still keep the sword erect ;

Besides the force it has to fright
The spirits of the shady night,
The same arts that did gain
A power, must it maintain.

ANDREW MARVELL.

THE RETREAT

Henry Vaughan is one of the most spiritual poets of the great rich seventeenth century. Childhood in one poem, the happy dead in the next, and daily life in the two following, are to him most beautiful mysteries of poetry, prayer, and sacred regret and hope.

HAPPY those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy !
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white, celestial thought ;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of his bright face :
When on some gilded cloud, or flow'r,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity :
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track !
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train ;
From whence the enlighten'd spirit sees
That shady City of Palm-trees.
But ah ! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move ;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE WORLD OF LIGHT

THEY are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here ;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest,
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days :
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary.
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope ! and high Humility,
High as the heavens above !
These are your walks, and you have showed them
me,
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death ! the jewel of the just,
Shining no where, but in the dark ;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark !

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest, may
know
At first sight, if the bird be flown ;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep :
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted
themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there ;
But when the hand that locked her up gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under Thee !
Resume Thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass ;
Or else remove me hence unto that hill
Where I shall need no glass.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

MORNING

WHEN first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like ; our bodies but forerun
The spirit's duty : true hearts spread and heave
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun :
Give Him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou
keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Yet never sleep the sun up ; prayer should
Dawn with the day : there are set awful hours
'Twixt heaven and us ; the manna was not good
After sunrising : far day sullies flowers :
Rise to prevent the sun ; sleep doth sins glut,
And heaven's gate opens when the world's is shut.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend,
And—O my soul,—awake !—
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of Peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges ;
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes—
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE SALUTATION

The joy in living, and in what Rossetti called "the house of life"—that is, the body of man—is here expressed with such freshness and delight as poetry had never expressed it before. That this delight and wonder are a boy's makes the poem the more magnificent, touching, and innocent.

THESE little limbs,
These eyes and hands which here I find,
These rosy cheeks wherewith my life begins,
Where have ye been? behind
What curtains were ye from me hid so long,
Where was, in what abyss, my speaking
tongue?

When silent I
So many thousand thousand years
Beneath the dust did in a chaos lie,
How could I smiles or tears,
Or lips or hands or eyes or ears perceive?
Welcome ye treasures which I now receive.

I that so long
Was nothing from eternity,
Did little think such joys as ear or tongue
To celebrate or see:
Such sounds to hear, such hands to feel, such
feet
Beneath the skies on such a ground to meet.

That was all spirit. I within did flow
 With seas of life, like wine ;
I nothing in the world did know
 But 'twas divine.

Harsh ragged objects were conceal'd,
 Oppressions, tears, and cries,
Sins, griefs, complaints, dissensions, weeping
 eyes
Were hid, and only things reveal'd
Which heavenly spirits and the angels prize.
 The state of innocence
And bliss, not trades and poverties,
 Did fill my sense.

The streets were paved with golden stones,
 The boys and girls were mine ;
O, how did all their lovely faces shine !
 The sons of men were holy ones :
In joy and beauty they appear'd to me ;
 And every thing which here I found,
While like an angel I did see,
 Adorn'd the ground.

Rich diamond and pearl and gold
 In every place was seen ;
Rare splendours, yellow, blue, red, white, and
 green,
Mine eyes did everywhere behold.
Great wonders clothed with glory did appear ;
 Amazement was my bliss ;
That and my wealth was everywhere ;
 No joy to this !

WONDER

This has the same inspiration, but it cannot be spared. Both poems are mystical; that is, they have depths and depths of meaning. But the exquisitely poetical language is simple. In these wonderful verses the poet has overcome Self, not by mournful ways but by generosity and joy. He holds all the things most worth having in common with mankind—a spiritual, imaginative communism.

How like an angel came I down !
How bright are all things here !
When first among His works I did appear,
O, how their glory me did crown !
The world resembled His Eternity,
In which my soul did walk,
And every thing that I did see
Did with me talk.

The skies in their magnificence,
The lively, lovely air,
O, how divine, how soft, how sweet, how fair !
The stars did entertain my sense,
And all the works of God, so bright and pure,
So rich and great did seem,
As if they ever must endure
In my esteem.

A native health and innocence
Within my bones did grow,
And while my God did all His glories show
I felt a vigour in my sense

That was all spirit. I within did flow
 With seas of life, like wine ;
I nothing in the world did know
 But 'twas divine.

Harsh ragged objects were conceal'd,
 Oppressions, tears, and cries,
Sins, griefs, complaints, dissensions, weeping
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 green,
Mine eyes did everywhere behold.
Great wonders clothed with glory did appear ;
 Amazement was my bliss ;
That and my wealth was everywhere ;
 No joy to this !

Curst and devised proprieties,
 With envy, avarice,
And fraud, those fiends that spoil even Paradise,
 Flew from the splendour of mine eyes.
And so did hedges, ditches, limits, bounds :
 I dream'd not aught of those ;
But wander'd over all men's grounds,
 And found repose.

Proprieties themselves were mine,
 And hedges ornaments ;
Walls, boxes, coffers, and their rich contents
 Did not divide my joys, but all combine.
Clothes, ribbons, jewels, laces, I esteem'd
 My joys by others worn :
For me they all to wear them seem'd,
 When I was born.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

THE LOSS OF THE *ROYAL GEORGE*

A straightforward poem, not very poetical, but tender without over-softness, and courageous without too much boasting. In the next little verse Cowper shows how well he watched the pranks of a dog with snow.

TOLL for the brave !
 The brave that are no more :
All sunk beneath the wave,
 Fast by their native shore.

Eight hundred of the brave,
 Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel
 And laid her on her side ;

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went *The Royal George*,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought,
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle,
No tempest gave the shock,
She sprang no fatal leak,
She ran upon no rock ;

His sword was in the sheath,
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes,
And mingle with your cup
The tears that England owes ;

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder
And plough the distant main ;

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Must plough the wave no more.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE WOODMAN'S DOG

SHAGGY, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur—
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.

WILLIAM COWPER.

TOM BOWLING

The charm of these fine affectionate and distinctly English verses is chiefly that all the imagery is that of a ship.

HERE, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew ;
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For Death has broach'd him to.
His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft ;
Faithful below, he did his duty,
But now he's gone aloft.

Tom never from his word departed,
His virtues were so rare ;
His friends were many and true-hearted,
His Poll was kind and fair.
And then he'd sing so blithe and jolly ;
Ah, many's the time and oft !
But mirth is turned to melancholy,
For Tom is gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather,
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call Life's crew together,
The word to pipe all hands.
Thus Death, who Kings and Tars despatches,
In vain Tom's life has doffed.
For though his body's under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft.

CHARLES DIBDIN.

THE PIPER

Blake is sometimes a difficult poet—difficult, one may venture to say, because he is so simple. You may love the simplicity without always knowing what it is about, and may wonder why his simplicity is so lovely when that of other writers is often not lovely at all.

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me :

“ Pipe a song about a Lamb ! ”
So I piped with merry cheer.
“ Piper, pipe that song again ; ”
So I piped : he wept to hear.

“ Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe ;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer : ”
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

“Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read.”
So he vanish’d from my sight,
And I pluck’d a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain’d the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

NIGHT

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine ;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon like a flower,
In heaven’s high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright ;
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are cover'd warm ;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep ;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying, " Wrath, by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness
Is driven away
From our immortal day.

" And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep ;
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep.
For, wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold."

WILLIAM BLAKE.

OF ENGLAND

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green ?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pasture seen ?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold,
Bring me my arrows of desire,
Bring me my spear, O clouds, unfold !
Bring me my chariot of fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE,

THE LAND OF DREAMS

AWAKE, awake, my little boy !
Thou wast thy mother's only joy.
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep ?
Awake, thy Father does thee keep.

" O, what land is the Land of Dreams,
What are its mountains and what are its streams ?
O father, I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

" Among the lambs clothèd in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight ;
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn,
O, when shall I again return ? "

Dear child, I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all night in the Land of Dreams,
But though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side.

" Father, O Father ! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear ?
The Land of Dreams is better far
Above the light of the morning star."

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE LAMB

LITTLE lamb who made thee ?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead ;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright ;
Gave thee such a tender voice ;
Making all the vales rejoice ;
Little lamb who made thee ?
Dost thou know who made thee ?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee.
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb :
He is meek and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee,
Little lamb, God bless thee.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

HOLY THURSDAY

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces
clean,
Came children walking two and two, in red, and
blue, and green ;
Gray-headed beades walked before, with wands
as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames
waters flow.

O what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of
London town !
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all
their own ;
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes
of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their
innocent hands.

Now, like a mighty wind, they raise to heaven the
voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of
heaven among ;
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians
of the poor.
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from
your door.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE TIGER

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
On what wings dare he aspire ?
What the hand dare seize the fire ?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet ?

What the hammer, what the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil ? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile his work to see ?
Did He who made the lamb make thee ?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

WILLIAM BLAKE.

TO A FIELD MOUSE

On turning her up in her nest with the plough.

This charming poem seems to me not only better than anything else written by this over-praised poet, but as fine, in its simplicity and thought, as anything ever written in poetry to bird or beast. As you read more and more poetry you will notice how often and how beautifully the poets have dwelt upon the contrast between man's sad, or hopeful, or frightened thought of the past and the future, and the freedom of the bird (Keats's nightingale, for instance, Shelley's lark, and Burns's mouse) from the "before and after."

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
 O what a panic's in thy breastie!
 Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickerin' brattle!
 I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
 Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
 Has broken Nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
 An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou mayst thieve;
 What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
 A daimen-icker in a thrave
 'S a sma' request:
 I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
 And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin !
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin' :
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O' foggage green !
An' bleak December's winds ensuin'
 Baith snell and keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozy here beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash ! the cruel coulter past
 Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble
 An' cranreuch cauld.

But, mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain :
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest compared wi' me !
The present only toucheth thee :
But, och ! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear !
An' forward though I canna see,
 I guess and fear !

ROBERT BURNS.

LOCHINVAR

Sir Walter Scott was fond of knights and ladies, and he interests us all in that gallant company. In the beautiful poem (following)—*Helvellyn*—he shows us that though he loved chivalry and songs and arms, he knew that nature and silence are greater.

O, YOUNG Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best ;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had
none,

He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.
He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none ;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late :
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.
So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride'smen, and kinsmen, and brothers
and all :

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
" O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar ? "
" I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied ;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young
Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet : the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She lock'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
“Now tread we a measure!” said young
Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace ;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet
and plume ;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, “ ’Twere better
by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young
Lochinvar.”

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger
stood near ;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung !
“She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
scaur ;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,” quoth young
Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby
clan ;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and
they ran :
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar ?

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

HELVELLYN

I CLIMB'D the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleam'd misty
and wide ;
All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was
yelling,
And starting around me the echoes replied.
On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn
was bending,
And Cathchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I mark'd the sad spot where the wanderer
had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain
heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretch'd in
decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather
Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless
clay.
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favourite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was
slumber ?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft
didst thou start ?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou
number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart ?

And O! was it meet, that—no requiem read o'er
him—

No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before
him—

Unhonour'd the Pilgrim from life should depart ?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has
yielded

The tapestry waves dark round the dim-lighted
hall ;

With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,

And pages stand mute by the canopied pall :
Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches
are gleaming ;

In the proudly arch'd chapel the banners are
beaming ;

Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
Lamenting a Chief of the People should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,

To lay down thy head like the meek mountain
lamb,

When, 'wilder'd, he drops from some cliff huge in
stature,

And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
And more stately thy couch by this desert lake
lying,

Thy obsequies sung by the gray plover flying,
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
In the arms of Helvellyn and Cathchedicam.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

TO DAFFODILS

No one has been so much loved for his love of nature as Wordsworth, one of the highest and greatest of our wonderful English poets. He has indeed a real passion for trees, hills, flowers and the days and nights of the seasons.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE INNER SHRINE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea :
Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep.
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?--
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

When this brave nation had been very temporarily
overcome by the armies of Napoleon.

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly
striven :
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length are driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE PET LAMB

Wordsworth's feeling for a little lamb parted from its mother and its mountain, and for the little girl who felt for the lamb, caused this lovely poem. The lamb and the child were in his own heart.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to
blink ;
I heard a voice : it said, " Drink, pretty creature,
drink ! "
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb, with a maiden at
its side.

No other sheep were near, the lamb was all
alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a
stone ;
With one knee on the grass did the little maiden
kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening
meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper
took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail
with pleasure shook.
“ Drink, pretty creature, drink,” she said, in such
a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

’Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty
rare !
I watched them with delight ; they were a lovely
pair.
Now with her empty can the maiden turned
away ;
But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she
stay.

Towards the lamb she looked ; and from that
shady place
I, unobserved, could see the workings of her face ;
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers
bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little maid might
sing :—

“ What ails thee, young one ? What ? Why pull
so at thy cord ?
Is it not well with thee ? Well both for bed and
board ?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can
be ;
Rest, little young one, rest ; what is’t that aileth
thee ?

“ What is it thou wouldst seek ? What is wanting
to thy heart ?

Thy limbs, are they not strong ? And beautiful
thou art :

This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have
no peers ;

And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears !

“ If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy
woollen chain,

This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst
gain ;

For rain and mountain storms, the like thou needst
not fear ;—

The rain and storm are things which scarcely can
come here.

“ Rest, little young one, rest ; thou hast forgot
the day

When my father found thee first in places far
away :

Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned
by none ;

And thy mother from thy side for evermore was
gone.

“ He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought
thee home :

A blessed day for thee ! then whither wouldst
thou roam ?

A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee
yea

Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have
been.

“ Thou know’st that twice a day I have brought
thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever
ran ;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with
dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is,
and new.

“ Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they
are now,
Then I’ll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the
plough ;
My playmate thou shalt be ; and when the wind
is cold,
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be
thy fold.

“ It will not, will not rest !—poor creature, can it
be
That ’tis thy mother’s heart which is working so
in thee ?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither
see nor hear.

“ Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and
fair !
I’ve heard of fearful winds and darkness that
come there ;
The little brooks, that seem all pastime and all
play,
When they are angry roar like lions for their
prey.

" Here thou needst not dread the raven in the
sky ;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard
by.
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy
chain ?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee
again ! "

As homeward through the lane I went with lazy
feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one-half of it
was mine.

Again, and once again did I repeat the song ;
" Nay," said I, " more than half to the damsel
must belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake
with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

Wordsworth makes a poem of the grief of a shepherd—a kind of sermon that would hardly have been perceived or thought of by any other heart than Wordsworth's—however kind.

In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone ;
But such a one on English ground,
 And in the broad highway I met ;
Along the broad highway he came,
 His cheeks with tears were wet ;
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad,
And in his arms a lamb he had.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide :
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him and said, " My friend,
 What ails you ? wherefore weep you so ? "
" Shame on me, sir ! this lusty lamb,
 He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock ;
He is the last of all my flock.

" When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet so it was, an ewe I bought ;

And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see ;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be ;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

“ Year after year my stock it grew :
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed !
Upon the Quantock Hills they fed ;
They throve, and we at home did thrive :
This lusty lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive ;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

“ Six children, sir, had I to feed ;
Hard labour in a time of need !
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the parish asked relief ;
They said I was a wealthy man,
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
Do this—how can we give to you,
They cried, what to the poor is due ?

“ I sold a sheep as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food :
For me—it never did me good.

A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day!

“ Another still ! and still another !
A little lamb, and then its mother !
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped
Till thirty were not left alive ;
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one ;
And I may say that many a time
I wished they all were gone ;
Reckless of what might come at last,
Were but the bitter struggle past.

“ To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind ;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me.
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease within doors or without ;
And crazily and wearily
I went my work about :
And oft was moved to flee from home
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

“ Sir, 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be ;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.

Alas ! it was an evil time ;
 God cursed me in my sore distress ;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
 I loved my children less ;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

“ They dwindled, sir, sad sight to see !
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe ;
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
 I had but only one :
And here it lies upon my arm—
 Alas, and I have none ;
To-day I fetched it from the rock—
It is the last of all my flock ! ”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

The English navy in time of war evoked the great spirit of the metre and the rhymes.

YE Mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze,—
Your glorious standard launch again,
To match another foe !
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave !
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave.
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow,—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep ;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore
When the stormy winds do blow,—
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors !
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow,—
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

THE WATER-SNAKES

This and the following verse are a few beautiful words from a great poem, *The Ancient Mariner*, too long for full quotation in this book.

BEYOND the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam : and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare ;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind Saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

SLEEP

O SLEEP ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA

A wooden sailing ship as the sailor loved it.

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast ;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I heard a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornèd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud ;
But hark the music, mariners !
The wind is piping loud ;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

THE ISLES OF GREECE

Byron writes for Greece in the person of a Greek. And in the person of a Greek, making himself a patriot for a country not his own, he died. This poem is, I think, the finest and noblest he has written. I have left out the two or three stanzas that required full knowledge of Greek history.

THE Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece !
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea ;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free ;
For, standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not think myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations ;—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they ?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—

The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one, arise,—we come, we come!'
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine ;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep ;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die :
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !
LORD BYRON.

THE NOSEGAY

One of the most beautiful of the many flower-poems
in English poetry.

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in
dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets ;

Faint oxslips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that
wets—

Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day ;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked
with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it !—O to whom ?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

SPIRIT OF DELIGHT

I cannot leave this out; I believe even children will
begin to love it now and love it better later.

RARELY, rarely comest thou,
Spirit of Delight !
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night ?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again ?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false ! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed ;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure ;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure ;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
 And the starry night ;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost ;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good ;
 Between thee and me
What difference ? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
 And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
 Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life ! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

THE THRUSH'S NEST

If more boys stopped to wonder at the building of a nest by the pecking of mere beaks, there would be less birds' nesting done. Ruskin has written that we have "joy and reverence in looking at a honeycomb or a bird's nest; we understand that these differ, by divinity of skill, from a lump of wax or a cluster of sticks."

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush,
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to eve a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, and I drank the sound
With joy; and often, an intruding guest,
I watched her secret toil from day to day—
How true she warped the moss, to form a nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay;
And by-and-by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs, as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted over shells of greeny blue;
And there I witnessed in the sunny hours
A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

JOHN CLARE.

TO A WATERFOWL

Note how from a simple moral thought is made here a most noble and majestic poem.

WHITHER, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side ?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert, and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere ;
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near !

And soon that toil shall end ;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone—the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form—yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He, who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

This great sonnet combines strength of feeling with stateliness of verse and splendour of imagery.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne :
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

JOHN KEATS.

TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run,
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-
trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel
shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy
cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy
hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined
flowers ;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost
keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozyings, hours by
hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats mourn
Among the river salallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

A wild poem, dealing with fairy's magic, and written with a poet's magic.

"O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

- "I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful—a faery's child ;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.
- "I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.
- "I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.
- "She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
"I love thee true."
- "She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore :
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes—
With kisses four.
- "And there she lull'd me asleep,
And there I dream'd.—Ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.
- "I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
Who cried—' La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall !'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,
 And I awoke, and found me here
 On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing."

JOHN KEATS.

THE ROBIN'S CROSS

Man has always been fond of the Redbreast, but he is not the only bird that received a pet name. We have Robin Redbreast, Philip Sparrow, Dick Swallow, Mag Pie and Jenny Wren. Few people remember that these affectionate names are additions. We hear of dicky-birds, whereas it is only the swallow who was Dick. And magpie is printed as one word. Pie is her proper name, both in English and in French. Darley's poem is a darling.

A LITTLE cross
 To tell my loss ;
 A little bed
 To rest my head ;
 A little tear is all I crave
 Upon my very little grave.

I strew thy bed
 Who loved thy lays ;
 The tear I shed,
 The cross I raise,
 With nothing more upon it than
 "Here lies the little friend of man."

GEORGE DARLEY.

EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE

A lost cause is nobly lamented in this epitaph by one who was himself a Whig.

To my true king I offered free from stain
Courage and faith ; vain faith, and courage vain.
For him I threw lands, honours, wealth away,
And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.
For him I languished in a foreign clime,
Gray-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime ;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees ;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep ;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting-place I asked, an early grave.
O thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine
 own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

LORD MACAULAY.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

Great reforms have been due, at any rate in their beginnings, to authors who have taken to heart the sufferings of children and the poor. When Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote her poem, little children worked in factories under cruel conditions, children who are now cared for and educated by the State. Charles Dickens did much for the reform of workhouses and the service of the sick poor, and he helped the abolition of public executions. Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, if not a very fine piece of literature, did much to bring about the freedom of the slaves in the United States.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their
mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in their sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in long ago.
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending with the frost,

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are dread to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary ;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak !
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children ;
For the outside earth is cold ;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her.
Was no room for any work in the close clay !
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake
her,
Crying, 'Get up, Alice, it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries.
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know
her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes.

And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime !

It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have.

They are binding up their hearts away from
breaking,

With a cerement from a grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do.

Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the
meadows

Like our weeds a-near the mine ?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine !

"For ah," say the children, "we are weary
And we cannot run or leap.

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,

We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burdens tiring

Through the coal-dark, underground—

Or all day we drive the wheels of iron

In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning—
Their wind comes in our faces—

Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.

Turns the sky in the high window blank and
reeling,

Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,

Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,

All are turning, all the day, and we with all.

And all day the iron wheels are droning,

And sometimes we could pray,

' O ye wheels ' (breaking out in mad moaning),

' Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ' "

Ay ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breath-
ing

For a moment, mouth to mouth !

Let them touch each other's hand in a fresh
wreathing

Of their tender human youth !

Let them feel that this cold metallic motion

Is not all the life God fashions or reveals.

Let them prove their living souls against the
notion

That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !—

Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,

Grinding life down from its mark ;

And the children's souls, which God is calling
sunward,

Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray ;

So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,

Will bless them another day.

They answer, " Who is God that He should hear
us,

While the rushing of the iron steel is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us,
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door.
Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
Hears our weeping any more ?

“ Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight’s hour of harm,
‘ Our Father,’ looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except ‘ Our Father,’
And we think that, in some pause of angels’ song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to
gather,
And hold both within His right hand, which is
strong.
‘ Our Father ! ’ If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
‘ Come and rest with me, my child.’

“ But no ! ” say the children, weeping faster,
“ He is speechless as a stone.
And they tell us of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to ! ” say the children—“ up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.”
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach ?
For God’s possible is taught by His world’s loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you !
They are weary ere they run.
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory,
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man without his wisdom ;
They sink in man's despair without its calm ;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep ! let them weep !

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on deity !
“ How long,” they say, “ how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's
heart—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And its purple shows your path !
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.”

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST

Mrs. Browning was certainly a romantic little girl; but she did not write ready-made romance. She no doubt thought of the beautiful things that were to happen to her, as does "Little Ellie" in her poem.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
'Mid the beeches of a meadow
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow:
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands all sleek and dripping
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses—"I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds:
He shall love me without guile,
And to him I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

“ And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath :
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

“ And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind ;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

“ But my lover shall not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face :
He will say, ‘ O Love thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace ! ’

“ Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand,
Till I answer, “ Rise and go !
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.’

“ Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a yes I must not say ;
Nathless maiden-brave, ‘ Farewell,’
I will utter and dissemble—
‘ Light to-morrow with to-day ! ’

“ Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river
There to put away all wrong ;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

“ Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
' Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting !
What wilt thou exchange for it ? ’

“ And the first time I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time a glove ;
But the third time I may bend
From my pride and answer—‘ Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.’

“ Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will run faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee :
' I am a duke's eldest son,
Thousand serfs do call me master,
But, O Love, I love but *thee* ! ’

“ He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds :
And when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.”

Little Ellie with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gaily,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
And went homeward round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding up the stream light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads,
Past the bough she stoops—and stops.
Lo, the wild swan had deserted,
And a rat had gnawed the reeds!

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds
Sooth I know not; but I know
She could never show him—never
That swan's nest among the reeds!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE BROOK

When you read Tennyson's long poem—*The Princess*—you will be asked to praise three famous lines in it:

Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawns,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmur of innumerable bees.

Beautiful as they are, these lines are something like mimicry of the things they describe. *The Brook* does not mimic, it gives the running of the water exquisitely, without trick.

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

LORD TENNYSON

ECHO SONG

Here is the splendour of sunshine on the white walls
of old castles that seem locked into the very stone of the
mountains, and the greater splendour of the sunshine
on the greater white of the snows above.

THE splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.
LORD TENNYSON.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

Here you have our first example of blank-verse—poetry in metre but without rhyme. It tells, in very noble English of the present day, the old Middle-Age story of the good and brave Arthur, King of the Britons. He hoped to make his kingdom pure, brave, and holy, but his knights failed him ; he was wounded to death in his last battle with the heathen, and he waited for the magical powers that were to receive him at his death. Does not Tennyson give us the frost, the moonlight, the lake, and the ocean ?

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel by the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be ;
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride ; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer morn, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rode across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
And, wneresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not ; take Excalibur
And fling him far into the middle mere :
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping
down

By zigzag patius, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining level of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt.
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparkles,
Myriads of topaz lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw. But at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed,
There, in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
" Thou hast performed my mission which I gave.
What is it thou hast seen, or what has heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
" I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt ? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, ‘ King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.’
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost.”

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
“ What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
“ I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
Either for lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence ;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great
brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an
arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
" Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
" Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
" My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, " Quick,
quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them
rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
And to the barge they came. There those three
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white

And colourless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with
dust ;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his
lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
“ Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world ;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.”

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :
“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever winds blow loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

LORD TENNYSON.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin
fades

For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard my-
self,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;
Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the
deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we
are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LORD TENNYSON.

SIR GALAHAD

Sir Galahad, the best and holiest knight of King Arthur's court, was cheered in his wars and wanderings by heavenly visions.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear ;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;

And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
 " O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near."
 So pass I hostel, hall and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All armed I ride, whate'er betide
 Until I find the holy Grail.

LORD TENNYSON.

The above is a selection of verses from Tennyson's poem, verses 3 and 4 of the original having been omitted.

ST. AGNES' EVE

This is supposed to be spoken by a nun on a mid-winter night—the Feast of St. Agnes, an early Christian girl-martyr in Rome, being in winter. Nuns are spiritually the "brides" of Our Lord, Who is the "Bridegroom" of the poem.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon :
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
 May my soul follow soon !
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,

Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thro' my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !

LORD TENNYSON.

THE DYING SWAN

It was thought in old days that the swan—a very silent bird—sang one only song just before it died. Tennyson makes of that strange old belief pure poetry—extra poetry, as it were, wild poetry—especially in the last five lines.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
 An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
 And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
 Ever the dreary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.
 One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far through the marish green and still
 The tangled watercourses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green and yellow.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy

Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold :
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of
gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.

LORD TENNYSON.

FROM "IN MEMORIAM"

How much poetry Tennyson gives us in familiar words, when he just says "The dawn, the dawn." In these stanzas he is recording the end of night in a garden.

TILL now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said

“The dawn, the dawn,” and died away ;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

LORD TENNYSON.

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

You will find great qualities in Browning, if not the wonderful quality of Tennyson, which is like the very feeling that early morning, or something in a field or a garden, gives to our hearts without our having words for it ; but Tennyson *has* words. Browning is a strong and very manly poet, a sturdy walker, as it were, in sturdy metre. *Home Thoughts* are in memory of Nelson's victories, especially Trafalgar, in sight of the coast of Africa.

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-
 West died away ;
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into
 Cadiz Bay ;
 Bluish mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar
 lay ;
 In the dimmest North-East distance, dawned
 Gibraltar grand and gray ;
 “Here and here did England help me : how can
 I help England ? ”—say,
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to
 praise and pray,
 While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

ROBERT BROWNING.

HERVÉ RIEL

In doing this honour to a hero, Browning shows us how simple and how loyal a great hero can be—especially, perhaps, a sea-hero.

I

ON the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred
and ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French—woe to
France !
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through
the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of
sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the
Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor
in full chase ;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,
Damfreville ;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all ;
And they signalled to the place
“ Help the winners of a race !
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us
quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will ! ”

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt
on board ;
“ Why, what hope or chance have ships like these
to pass ? ” laughed they :
“ Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage
scarred and scorred,
Shall the *Formidable* here, with her twelve-and-
eighty guns,
Think to make the river-mouth by the single
narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of
twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside ?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring ? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay ! ”

IV

There was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate :
“ Here's the English at our heels ; would you have
them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern
and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound ?
Better run the ships aground ! ”
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
“ Not a minute more to wait !
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels
on the beach !
France must undergo her fate.”

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck
amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first,
second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tour-
ville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?"
cries Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards,
fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the
soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every
swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the
river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the
lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted the bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of
Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were
worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs,
believe me there's a way!

Only let me lead the line,
 Have the biggest ship to steer,
 Get this *Formidable* clear,
 Make the others follow mine,
 And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I
 know well,
 Right to Solidor, past Grève,
 And there lay them safe and sound ;
 And if one ship misbehave—
 Keel so much as grate the ground,
 Why, I've nothing but my life—here's my head,
 cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
 "Steer us in, then, small and great !
 Take the helm, lead the line, save the squad-
 ron !" cried its chief.
 Captains, give the sailor place !
 He is Admiral, in brief.
 Still the north-wind, by God's grace !
 See the noble fellow's face
 As the big ship, with a bound,
 Clears the entry like a hound,
 Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the
 wide seas profound.
 See, safe through shoal and rock,
 How they follow in a flock,
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates
 the ground,
 Not a spar that comes to grief !
 The peril, see, is past,
 All are harboured to the last,
 And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor"—sure as fate,
 Up the English come—too late !

VIII

So the storm subsides to calm !
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.
" Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away.
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the
Rance ! "
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's
countenance !
Out burst all with one accord,
" This is Paradise for Hell !
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing ! "
What a shout, and all one word,
" Hervé Riel ! "
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, " My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips :
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse !
Demand whate'er you will,

France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have ! or my name's
not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue :
" Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty's done,
 And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what
 is it but a run ?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
 Since the others go ashore—
Come ! A good whole holiday !
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the
 Belle Aurore ! "
That he asked and that he got—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost :
Not a pillar or a post
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell ;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to
 wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence
 England bore the bell :

Go to Paris : rank on rank
 Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank !

You shall look long enough ere you come to
Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse !
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife
the Belle Aurore !

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE LOSS OF THE *BIRKENHEAD*

(Supposed to be told by a soldier who was saved).

A fine record of that act of heroism, when, without
the excitement, or the hope, of battle, with their ship
sinking slowly in a calm sea, Englishmen gave the
boats to the women and children, and drew up in
line, to die.

RIGHT on our flank the crimson sun went down ;
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose ;
When, like the wild shriek from some captured
town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship *Birkenhead* lay hard and fast,
Caught without hope upon a hidden rock ;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them
passed
The spirit of that shock.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away disorderly the planks
From underneath her keel.

So calm the air, so calm and still the flood,
That low down in its blue translucent glass
We saw the great fierce fish, that 'hirst for blood,
Pass slowly, then repass.

They tarried, the waves tarried, for their prey !
The sea turned one clear smile ! Like things asleep
Those dark shapes in the azure silence lay,
As quiet as the deep.

Then amidst oath, and prayer, and rush, and
wreck,
Faint screams, faint questions waiting no reply,
Our Colonel gave the word, and on the deck
Formed us in line to die.

To die !—'twas hard, whilst the sleek ocean glowed
Beneath a sky as fair as summer flowers :
All to the boats ! cried one : he was, thank God,
No officer of ours !

Our English hearts beat true : we would not stir :
That base appeal we heard, but heeded not :
On land, on sea, we had our Colours, sir,
To keep without a spot.

They shall not say in England, that we fought
With shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek ;
Into mean safety, mean deserters, brought
By trampling down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
The oars ply back again, and yet again ;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men.

What follows, why recall? The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide,
As others under turf.

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild
grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain.

SIR FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE.

A HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE

The "Eygre" is the tidal wave. This poem is beautiful throughout, but pay great attention to the stanza beginning "So far, so fast," where quick movement is given with such wonderful quickness—such shortness.

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Enderby!'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, he knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall;

And there was naught of strange, beside
The flight of mews and peewits pied,
By millions crouched on the old sea-wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes !
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies ;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth—
My sonne's fair wife Elizabeth.

"Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !" calling,
Ere the early dewes were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.
"Cusha ! Cusha !" all along,
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song.

"Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !" calling,
"For the dewes will soone be falling ;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow ;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking-shed."

If it be long, aye, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong ;

And all the aire it seemeth mee
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadow mote be scene,
Save where, full fyve good miles away,
The steeple towered from out the greene ;
And lo ! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the countryside
That Saturday at eventide.

The swannerds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth ;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The " Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows,
They sayde, " And why should this thing be,
What danger lowers by land or sea ?
They ring the tune of Enderby !

" For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping downe ;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne ;
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring ' The Brides of Enderby ? ' "

I looked without, and lo ! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main.
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin' rang again,
" Elizabeth ! Elizabeth ! "
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth).

" The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death :
" God save you, mother ! " straight he said ;
" Where is my wife, Elizabeth ? "

" Good sonne, where Lindis winds away
With her two bairns I marked her long ;
And ere yon bells beganne to play,
Afar I heard her milking song."
He looked across the grassy sea,
To right, to left, " Ho Enderby ! "
They rang " The Brides of Enderby ! "

With that he cried and beat his breast ;
For lo ! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud ;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed,
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine ;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.

Then bankes came down with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow, seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at our feet ;
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by :
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church-tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see ;
And awesome bells they were to me,
That in the dark rang " Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed ;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed :
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
" O come in life, or come in death !
O lost ! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more ?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare !
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass ;
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !
To manye more than myne and mee ;
But each will mourn his own (shee sayeth),
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Then my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis' shore,
"Cusha, Cusha, Cusha !" calling
Ere the early dewes be falling ;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha, Cusha !" all along.
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth ;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver :
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling,
To the sandy lonesome shore,
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow ;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot ;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow ;

Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and follow ;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head ;
Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty to the milking-shed."

JEAN INGELow.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

We have often heard of mermaids ; but of none so beautiful as this merman, whom the poet fancies watching at the edge of his own sea, looking across at the strange houses and strange towns of men, for the wife who has forsaken him and gone to land and mankind.

COME, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay ;
Now the great winds shorewards blow ;
Now the salt tides seawards flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know :
" Margaret ! Margaret ! "
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear :
Children's voices, wild with pain.
Surely she will come again.

Call her once, and come away.

 This way, this way.

“Mother dear, we cannot stay.”

The wild white horses foam and fret,

 Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down.

 Call no more.

One last look at the white-walled town,

And the little gray church on the windy shore,

 Then come down.

She will not come though you call all day.

 Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday

We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?

 In the caverns where we lay,

 Through the surf and through the swell,

The far-off sound of a silver bell ?

Sand-strewn caverns cool and deep,

Where the winds are all asleep ;

Where the spent lights quiver and gleam ;

Where the salt weed sways in the stream ;

Where the sea-beasts ranged all round

Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground ;

Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,

Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;

Where great whales come sailing by,

Sail and sail, with unshut eye,

Round the world for ever and aye ?

 When did music come this way ?

 Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday

(Call yet once) that she went away ?

Once she sat with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea
And the youngest sat on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it
 well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off
 bell,
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green
 sea,
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with
 thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves:
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
 caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the
 bay,
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come," I said, as we rose through the surf in the
 bay.
We went up the beach in the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled
 town,
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was
 still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their
 prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climbed on the graves on the stones worn
with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

She sat by the pillar ; we saw her clear ;
" Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, " we are here alone.

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were scaled to the holy book.

" Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the
door."

Come away, children, call no more,
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down,

Down to the depths of the sea.

She sits at her wheel in the humming town.

Singing most joyfully.

Hark, what she sings : " O joy, O joy,
From the humming street, and the child with its
toy,

From the priest and the bell, and the holy well,

From the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun."

And so she sings her fill,

Singing most joyfully,

Till the shuttle falls from her hand,

And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window and looks at the
sand ;

And over the sand at the sea ;

And her eyes are set in a stare ;

And anon there breaks a sigh,

And anon there drops a tear,

From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow laden,
 A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children,
Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, " Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she,
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom ;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom :
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie ;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.

We will gaze from the sand-hills
At the white sleeping town ;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back, down.
Singing, " There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she :
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

KEITH OF RAVELSTON

One of the most perfectly beautiful ghost stories I
know ; poetry in every line and every word.

THE murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine :
" Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line ! "

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill
And through the silver meads ;

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she !

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode through the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade ;
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine ;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold ;
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger ! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Step out three steps where Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear !
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear !

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

SYDNEY DOBELL.

THE YEAR'S ROUND

In three simple stanzas a great poet is able to give us
a year, from winter to winter again.

The crocus, while the days are dark,
Unfolds its saffron sheen ;
At April's touch the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of night,
'While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The winter falls, the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars ;
The snowdrift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierced with stars.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

THE PHASES OF THE MOON

If we are ever puzzled by the thin semicircle of the moon—whether it is “crescent” or dwindling, these four charming lines will teach us.

O Lady Moon, your horns point to the East ;
Shine, be increased !
O Lady Moon, your horns point to the West ;
Wane, be at rest !

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

FOREVER

Admire the irony—that is, the way of proving what you want to say by pretending that you want to say the contrary. It was, I think, at first an American who wrote “for ever” as one word. We have learnt many good things from America, but we should not have copied that ! Let all children who enjoy this poem for ever after write “for ever.”

FOREVER ! 'Tis a single word !
Our rude forefathers deem'd it two.
Can you imagine so absurd
A view ?

Forever ! What abysses of woe
The word reveals, what frenzy, what
Despair ! For ever (printed so)
Did not.

It looks, ah me ! how trite and tamed !
 It fails to sadden or appal
Or solace—it is not the same
 At all.

O thou to whom it first occur'd
 To solder the disjoin'd, and dower
Thy native language with a word
 Of power ;

We bless thee ! Whether far or near
 Thy dwelling, whether dark or fair
Thy kingly brow, is neither here
 Nor there.

But in men's hearts shall be thy throne,
 While the great pulse of England beats :
Thou coiner of a word unknown
 To Keats !

Ard nevermore must printer do
 As men did long ago ; but run
“ For ” into “ ever,” bidding two
 Be one.

Forever ! passion-fraught, it throws
 O'er the dim page a gloom, a glamour :
It's sweet, it's strange ; and I suppose
 It's grammar.

Forever ! 'Tis a single word !
 And yet our fathers deem'd it two :
Nor am I confident they err'd ;
 Are you ?

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY.

THE SCHOOLMASTER ABROAD WITH
HIS SON

OH, what harper could worthily harp it,
Mine Edward! this wide-stretching wold
(Look out *wold*) with its wonderful carpet
Of emerald, purple, and gold?
Look well at it—also look sharp, it
Is getting so cold.

The purple is heather (*erica*);
The yellow gorse—call'd sometimes “whin.”
Cruel boys on its prickles might spike a
Queen beetle as if on a pin.
You may ride in it, if you would like a
Few holes in your skin.

You wouldn't? Then think of how kind you
Should be to the insects who crave
Your compassion—and then look behind you
At yon barley-ears! Don't they look brave
As they undulate (*undulate*, mind you,
From *unda*, a wave.)

The noise of those sheep-bells, how faint it
Sounds here (on account of our height)!
And this hillock itself, who could paint it,
With its changes of shadow and light?
Is it not—(never, Eddie, say “ain't it”)—
A marvellous sight?

Then yon desolate eerie morasses,
The haunt of the snipe and the hern—
(I shall question the two upper classes
On *aquatiles* when we return)—
Why, I see on them absolute masses
Of *felix*, or fern.

How it interests e'en a beginner
(Or *tiro*) like dear little Ned!
Is he listening? As I am a sinner,
He's asleep—he is wagging his head.
Wake up! I'll go home to my dinner,
And you to your bed.

The boundless ineffable prairie;
The splendour of mountain and lake,
With their hues that seem ever to vary;
The mighty pine-forests which shake
In the wind, and in which the unwary
May tread on a snake;

And this wold, with its heathery garment,
Are themes undeniably great.
But—although there is not any harm in 't—
It's perhaps little good to dilate
On their charms to a dull little varmint
Of seven or eight.

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY.

THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

Of this pure good fun—plenty of rhyme but no reason—a reader, who took things rather more seriously than is needful, once said, “I do think this poem has a bad moral—the misleading of little helpless animals.” Well, if one could be sorry for trotting oysters, no doubt one would be. But just think of an oyster giving its hand to a walrus, and trotting!

THE sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might :
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright—
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done—
“It’s very rude of him,” she said,
To come and spoil the fun.”

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The lands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud because
No cloud was in the sky :
No birds were flying overhead—
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand ;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand :

"If this were only cleared away,"
They said, "It *would* be grand."

"If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,
"That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"
The Walrus did beseech.
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach:
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said:
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head—
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster bed.

But four young oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat—
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

Four other oysters followed them,
And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more—

All hopping through the sandy waves,
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked out a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low.
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things :
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
Before we have our chat ;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat ! "
"No hurry !" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,
"Is what we chiefly need :
Pepper and vinegar besides,
Are very good indeed—
Now if you're ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed."

"But not on us !" the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
"After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do ! "

"The night is fine," the Walrus said.

"Do you admire the view ?

"It was so kind of you to come !

And you are very nice ! "

The Carpenter said nothing but

"Cut us another slice :

I wish you were not quite so deaf—

I've had to ask you twice ! "

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,

"To play them such a trick,

After we've brought them out so far,

And made them trot so quick ! "

The Carpenter said nothing but

"The butter's spread too thick."

"I weep for you," the Walrus said :

"I deeply sympathise."

With sobs and tears he sorted out

Those of the largest size,

Holding his pocket-handkerchief

Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,

"You've had a pleasant run !

Shall we be trotting home again ? "

But answer there was none—

And this was scarcely odd, because

They'd eaten every one.

. LEWIS CARROLL.

VESPERS

There is something boyish in the note of some birds ;
something sporting. I find it in the song of the Redbreast
in autumn. T. E. Brown finds it delightfully in the
Blackbird's.

O BLACKBIRD, what a boy you are !
How you do go it !
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star—
How you do blow it !
And does she hear you, blackbird boy, so far ?
Or is it wasted breath ?
“ Good Lord, she is so bright
To-night ! ”
The blackbird saith.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.

THE LAUGH

This happy poem needs no explaining. But perhaps
it is well to say that an Æolian harp was so strung
that its strings gave a musical sound at the breath of
the wind.

AN empty laugh, I heard it on the road
Shivering the twilight with its lance of mirth ;
And yet, why empty ? Knowing not its birth,
This much I know, that it goes up to God ;
And if to God, from God it surely starts,
Who has within Himself the secret springs
Of all the lovely, causeless, unclaimed things,
And loves them in His very heart of hearts.

A girl of fifteen summers, pure and free,
Æolian, vocal to the lightest touch
Of fancy's winnowed breath—Ah, happy
such
Whose life is music of the eternal sea !
Laugh on, laugh loud and long, O merry
child ;
And be not careful to unearth a cause :
Thou art serenely placed above our laws,
And we in thee with God are reconciled.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.

BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

America, since the great war that kept the Union from breaking up into two nations, has remained ever since at peace with itself. A glorious result of the victory of the Northern States, which had no slaves, over the Southern States, which bought and sold them like cattle, was that slavery was ended for ever. In the hope of that great result of the war Julia Ward Howe wrote her splendid marching hymn for the men of the Northern armies.

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of
the Lord :
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes
of wrath are stored :
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible
swift sword :
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred
 circling camps :
They have builded Him an altar in the evening
 dews and damps :
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and
 flaring lamps :
 His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows
 of steel :
"As ye deal with My contemnners so with you
 My grace shall deal :"
Let the hero born of woman crush the serpent
 with his heel !
 Since God is marching on.

He hath sounded forth the trumpet that shall
 never call retreat ;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His
 judgment seat :
Oh be swift, my soul, to answer Him ! Be jubilant,
 my feet !
 Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across
 the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you
 and me ;
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make
 men free !
 While God is marching on.

Glory ! glory, hallelujah !
Glory ! glory, hallelujah !
Glory ! glory, hallelujah !
 His truth is marching on.

JULIA WARD HOWE.

SONG OF THE SOLDIERS

Another marching poem. Thomas Hardy knew that in 1914 England was right in standing up to the great power that tried to rule by war.

WHAT of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
To hazards whence no tears can win us ;
What of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away ?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye
Who watch us stepping by,
With doubt and dolorous sigh ?
Can much pondering so hoodwink you ?
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye ?

Nay. We see well what we are doing,
Though some may not see—
Dalliers as they be !—
England's need are we ;
Her distress would set us rueing :
Nay. We see well what we are doing,
Though some may not see !

In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just,
And that braggarts must
Surely bite the dust,
March we to the field ungrieving,
In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
To hazards whence no tears can win us ;
Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away.

THOMAS HARDY.

PRO REGE NOSTRO

Love of England, gratitude to one's country, is the happy duty of all of us. There is perhaps too much war and too much boasting in this resounding song. But it is a noble song, nevertheless, and the poet is ready, is eager, to do and suffer something for his England. How splendidly all the stanzas end ! What a resounding note !

WHAT have I done for you,
 England, my England ?
What is there I would not do,
 England my own ?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear,
 As the song on your bugles blown,
 England—
Round the world on your bugles blown !

Where shall the watchful sun,
 England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
 England, my own ?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
 To the song on your bugles blown,
 England—
Down the years on your bugles blown ?

Ever the faith endures,
 England, my England :—
“ Take and break us : we are yours,
 England, my own !

Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky :
Death is death ; but we shall die
 To the song on your bugles blown,
 England—
To the stars on your bugles blown ! ”

Mother of ships whose might,
 England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
 England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-chief of the ancient sword,
There's the menace of the Word
 In the song on your bugles blown,
 England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown !

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

“OVER THE SEA TO SKYE”

Stevenson was great in poetry and prose. Rum, Mull, Eigg are the oddly-named islands off the Highland coast. Who would not set sail with that lad in the far-off sea, with a fresh wind, to such a poem ?

SING me a song of the lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I ?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port,
Eigg on the starboard bow ;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul :
Where is that glory now ?

Give me again all that was there.
Give me the sun that shone !
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
Give me the lad that's gone !

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I ?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

AS HAPPY AS KINGS

THE world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE SICK CHILD

This delightful and dearly-beloved author was often ill in childhood. He remembers in this touching poem what a feverish child thinks and fears, and how strange a sense there is of things too near and things too far. How lovely are the lines spoken by the mother about "the birds and the hills of sheep"!

CHILD

O MOTHER, lay your hand on my brow!
O, mother, mother, where am I now?
Why is the room so gaunt and great?
Why am I lying awake so late?

MOTHER

Fear not at all; the night is still,
Nothing is here that means you ill.
Nothing but lamps the whole town through,
And never a child awake but you.

CHILD

Mother, mother, speak low in my ear,
Some of the things are so great and near,
Some are so small and far away,
I have a fear that I cannot say.
What have I done, and what do I fear,
And why are you crying, mother dear?

MOTHER

Out in the city sounds begin,
Thank the kind God, the carts come in!
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,
The day shall be blue on the window-blind.

Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,
To dream of the birds and the hills of sheep.

So in the dream-beleaguered night,
While the other children lie
Quiet, and the stars are high,
The poor unused and playful mite
Lies strangling in the grasp of fright.

O, when all golden comes the day,
And the other children leap,
Singing, from the doors of sleep,
Lord, take Thy heavy hand away,
Lord, in Thy mercy, heal or slay.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

DON QUIXOTE

When knights and chivalry were going out of fashion, a Spanish author, Cervantes, wrote a comic and yet sad caricature of a knight he called Don Quixote, who went about looking for adventures. He rode a melancholy horse, and fancied that he was protecting beautiful ladies in distress and fighting giants and other enemies. He fancied that even some windmills were enemies; and he made his lance ready, put spurs to his horse, and charged them. Austin Dobson thought there were worse things in the later world than such heroes as this poor knight.

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,

Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack !
 To make wiseacredom, both high and low,
 Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee
 go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track !

Alas, poor knight ! Alas, poor soul possest !
 Yet would to-day when courtesy grows chill,
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
 Some fire of thine might burn within us still !
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
 And charge in earnest . . . were it but a mill.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

THE REAPER

The rich imagery, in so few words, all holds together perfectly : the sickle of the moon, the reaping, the granary.

TELL me whither, maiden June,
Down the dusky slope of noon,
With thy sickle of a moon,
 Goest thou to reap.

“ Fields of fancy by the stream
Of night in silvery silence gleam,
To reap with many a harvest-dream
 The granary of sleep.”

JOHN BANISTER TABB.

GOD'S LIKENESS

A lovely lesson of charity between every man and his neighbour.

NOR in mine own, but in my neighbour's face
Must I Thine image trace :
Nor he in his, but in the light of mine,
Behold Thy face divine.

JOHN BANISTER TABB.

HOLY GROUND

PAUSE where apart the fallen sparrow lies,
And lightly tread ;
For there the pity of a Father's eyes
Enshrines the dead.

JOHN BANISTER TABB.

“MAMMY”

The negro nurse of American children born in the Southern states of the Union had the pet name of “Mammy.” This poet (a Catholic priest) was blind for some years before his death. He, an American, writes of his nurse’s black face ; and, as usual, puts much fine meaning and imagination into a very few beautiful lines.

I LOVED her countenance whereon,
Despite the longest day,
The tenderness of visions gone
In shadow seemed to stay.
And now, when faithless sight is fled
Beyond my waking gaze,
Of darkness I am not afraid—
It is my Mammy’s face.

JOHN BANISTER TABB.

THE BROOK

The brook is speaking, expressing an idea most fit for poetry—the carrying of the mountain’s message to the sea.

It is the mountain to the sea
That makes a messenger of me :
And, lest I loiter on the way
And lose what I was meant to say,
He sets his reverie to song
And bids me sing it all day long.
Farewell ! for here the stream is slow,
And I have many a mile to go.

JOHN BANISTER TABB.

GOING DOWN-HILL ON A BICYCLE

A Boy's Song

The two following poems are all joy and life, as spiritual as the poetry of the seventeenth century, and with a sporting enterprise in them.

WITH lifted feet, hands still
I am poised, and down the hill
Dart, with heedful mind ;
The air goes by in a wind.

Swifter and yet more swift,
Till the heart, with a mighty lift,
Makes the lungs laugh, the throat cry :—
“ O bird, see ; see, bird, I fly.

“ Is this, is this your joy,
O bird, then I, though a boy,
For a golden moment share
Your feathery life in air ! ”

Say, heart, is there aught like this
In a world that is full of bliss ?
’Tis more than skating, bound
Steel-shod to the level ground.

Speed slackens now, I float
Awhile in my airy boat ;
Till when the wheels scarce crawl
My feet to the pedals fall.

Alas, that the longest hill
Must end in a vale ; but still,
Who climbs with toil, wheresoe’er,
Shall find wings waiting there.

H. C. BEECHING.

PRAYERS

GOD who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free,
To run, to ride, to swim :

Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him :
Take the thanks of a boy.

Jesu, King and Lord,
Whose are my foes to fight,
Gird me with Thy sword,
Swift and sharp and bright.

Thee would I serve if I might ;
And conquer if I can,
From day-dawn till night,
Take the strength of a man.

Spirit of Love and truth,
Breathing in grosser clay,
The light and flame of youth,
Delight of men in the fray,

Wisdom in strength's decay ;
From pain, strife, wrong to be free,
This best gift I pray,
Take my spirit to Thee.

H. C. BERCHING.

THE COUNTRY FAITH

HERE in the country's heart
 Where the grass is green
 Life is the same sweet life
 As it e'er hath been.

Trust in a God still lives,
 And the bell at morn
 Floats with a thought of God
 O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
 And the crop grows tall—
 This is the country faith,
 And the best of all!

NORMAN GALE.

LINES:

(Sent with a copy of "Robin" Herrick's Poems)

The poet plays gaily, but without irreverence, with the signs proper to saints. His homage to his "saint of flowers" is tender and gay.

FRESH with all airs of woodland brooks
 And scents of showers,
 Take to your haunt of holy books
 This saint of flowers.

When meadows burn with budding May,
 And heaven is blue,
 Before his shrine our prayers we say—
 Saint Robin true.

Love crowned with thorns is on his staff—
Thorns of sweet-brier ;
His benediction is a laugh,
Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
Unction distils ;
He hath a nimbus round his head
Of daffodils.

EDMUND GOSSE.

DAISY

A meeting between a poet no longer young and a little Sussex girl. It is as simple as it is beautiful, until the unexpected sadness of the ending.

WHERE the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf !—

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea ;
And, with the sea-breeze, hand in hand,
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine :
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way ;
But there's never a bird so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day !

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face !
She gave me tokens three :—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word—strings of sand !
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For, standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end ;
Their scent survives their close,
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose !

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way :—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went, and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad ;
At all the sadness in the sweet
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan ;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

JULY FUGITIVE

The sweetness with which the poet plays with his image—that of July as a lovely damsel—allures the reader to join in the game of hide-and-seek of fancies.

CAN you tell me where has hid her
 Pretty Maid July?
I would swear one day ago
 She passed by,
I would swear that I do know
 The blue bliss of her eye:
“Tarry, maid, maid,” I bid her;
 But she hastened by.
Do you know where she has hid her,
 Maid July?

Yet in truth it needs must be,
 The flight of her is old;
Yet in truth it needs must be,
 For her nest, the earth, is cold.
No more in the poolèd Even
 Wade her rosy feet,
Dawn-flakes no more plash from them
 To poppies 'mid the wheat.
She has mudded the day's oozes
 With her petulant feet;
Scared the clouds that floated
 As sea-birds they were,
Slow on the cœrule
 Lulls of the air,
Lulled on the luminous
 Levels of air:
She has chidden in a pet

All her stars from her ;
Now they wander loose and sigh
Through the turbid blue,
Now they wander, weep, and cry—
Yea, and I too—
“ Where are you, sweet July,
Where are you ? ”

When the bird quits the cage,
We set the cage outside,
With seed and with water,
And the door wide,
Haply we may win it so
Back to abide.
Hang her cage of earth out
O'er Heaven's sunward wall,
Its four gates open, winds in watch
By reinèd cars at all ;
Relume in hanging hedgerows
The rain-quenched blossom,
And roses sob their tears out
On the gale's warm heaving bosom ;
Shake the lilies till their scent
Over-drip their rims ;
That our runaway may see
We do know her whims :
Sleek the tumbled waters out
For her travelled limbs ;
Strew and smoothe blue night thereon,
There will—O not doubt her !—
The lovely sleepy lady lie,
With all her stars about her !

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

AT LORD'S CRICKET-GROUND

(Lancashire playing)

The reference to the Wars of the Roses is clear. Francis Thompson was a Lancashire man. He was not a cricketer, or a player of any kind, but he loved to look on; and as illness came upon him, he remembered with tears the looking-on of years ago, when Hornby and Barlow were at the wicket.

It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron
folk,

Though my own red roses there may blow;
It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron
folk,

Though the red roses crest the caps, I know.
For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy
coast,

And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a
ghost,

And I look through my tears on a soundless-
clapping host

As the run-stealer's flicker to and fro,
To and fro,

O my Hornby and my Barlow long ago!

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

LAST WORDS OVER A LITTLE BED AT NIGHT

The mother who watches day and night over the growth of her children dwells—too much, surely, for the fact, but not too much for her warm, clinging fancy—on the change that even one night brings about in the darkening of the childish fair hair, and the lengthening of the little legs. She finds the change so quick that she says good-bye to the little ones who will be different children in the morning

GOOD-NIGHT, pretty sleepers of mine—

I never shall see you again :
Ah, never in shadow or shine ;
Ah, never in dew or in rain.

In your small dreaming-dresses of white,
With the wild bloom you gathered to day
In your quiet shut hands, from the light
And the dark you will wander away.

Though no graves in the bee-haunted grass,
And no love in the beautiful sky,
Shall take you as yet, you will pass,
With this kiss, through these tear-drops. Good-
bye !

With less gold and more gloom in their hair,
When the buds near have faded to flowers,
Three faces may wake here as fair—
But older than yours are, by hours !

Good night, then, lost darlings of mine—

I never shall see you again :

Ah, never in shadow or shine,

Ah, never in dew or in rain.

SARA M. B. PIATT.

SELF-COMFORTED

The ragged child has received sixpence from the little smart one. Her poor little envy finds a strange little comfort !

THE ragged child across the street

Stared at the child that looked so sweet.

“ I’ll have a whiter dress than you,

And wear some prettier rosebuds, too ;

“ And not be proud a bit,” she said,

“ I thank you, miss—when I am dead.”

SARA M. B. PIATT.

INDIAN FEVERS

*(On the author's discovery of the cause and cure
of Malaria.)*

The poet, a great scientific discoverer, prays for help to find the germ that causes these fevers. His is a noble need, and the thanksgiving, in triumph, that follows the granting of his prayer, is even nobler and greater. What happiness, and what humility !

THE PETITION

IN this, O Nature, yield, I pray, to me.
I pace and pace, and think, and think, and take
The fever's hands, and note down all I see,
That some dim distant light may haply break.

The painful faces ask, Can we not cure ?
We answer, No, not yet : we seek the laws.
O God, reveal through all this thing obscure
The unseen, small but million-murdering cause.
BANGALORE, 1890-3.

THE REPLY

THIS day, relenting God
Has placed within my hand
A wondrous thing : and God
Be praised. At His command,

Seeking His secret deeds
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million-murdering Death.

I know this little thing
A myriad men will save :
O Death, where is thy sting ?
Thy victory, O grave ?

SIR RONALD ROSS

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

What a list of good things—the landscape, the friend,
the good hunger and thirst, and—best of all—"the
striding heart" !

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these :
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees ;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too ;

A shadowy highway cool and brown
Alluring up and enticing down :

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp ;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding heart from hill to hill ;

The tempter apple over the fence ;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince ;

The palish asters along the wood—
A lyric touch of the solitude ;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through—

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird ;

The resonant far-listening morn,
And the hoarse whisper of the corn ;

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost ;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat on their corselets, valiant still ?)

A hunger fit for the kings of the sea,
And a loaf of bread for Dickon and me ;

A thirst like that of the Thirsty sword,
And a jug of cider on the board ;

An idle moon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring ;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry ;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Asking nothing, revealing naught,
But minting his words from a fund of thought,

A keeper of silence eloquent,
Needy, yet royally well content,

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
And full of the mellow juice of life,

A taster of wine, with an eye for a maid,
Never too bold and never afraid,

Never heart-whole, never heart-sick,
(These are the things I worship in Dick),

No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must,

A lover of books but a reader of men
No cynic and no charlatan,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands—

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of His will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

Delusion afar, delight anear,
From morrow to morrow, from year to year.

A jack-o'-lantern, a fairy fire,
A dare, a bliss, and a desire!

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the
dew!)

The broad gold wake of the afternoon ;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon ;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace ;

With only another league to wend ;
And two brown arms at the journey's end !

These are the joys of the open road—
For him who travels without a load.

BLISS CARMAN.

LAMBS

The great beauty of Katharine Tynan's poetry is its tender affectionateness. She has a fine ear for metre ; some syllables are not quite regular, but when read with attention to time as well as stress, they disclose the beauty of the variety.

I SAW the ewes lying,
Their lambs bleating and crying,
Poor lambs, weary of travel, on the green sod.
Sore-foot, crying and bleating,
Each sweet to its sweeting—
And thought of another lamb, the Lamb of God.

In the sweet May so tender,
With trees in their new splendour,
I heard a lamb cry for its milky dam,
With a low bleat and weary,
As one dear to its dearie—
And thought on another lamb, dear Mary's lamb.

Each lamb beside its mother,
Its own, not any other,
Comforted with her milk, lay sweetly at rest,
Full fed and safe from harm,
As a child in the mother's arm—
I thought of a downy head at Mary's breast.

I saw the lambs playing
No darling lost or straying,
About their mothers on the dewy heath,
Around the daisies and clover,
Each small love by its lover—
And thought of Mary's boy in Nazareth.

A lamb so soft and curled—
Oh sweetest name in the world !
The Child, the Son, the Lamb ; Oh heavenly Name !
That holds in its completeness
All lovely things and sweetness—
The Holy Spirits' thought for the Son—" God's
Lamb."

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

I cannot think that St. Francis believed the birds understood his sermons, or that the fishes did either. No, this was his way of doing poetry, and lovely poetry indeed. All the poets have preached, in their way, to birds and beasts. St. Francis, a great saint of the Middle Ages, in Italy, founded an Order for the help of poor human creatures that is at this day working all over the world.

LITTLE sisters, the birds :
We must praise God, you and I—
You, with songs that fill the sky,
I, with halting words.

All things tell His praise,
Woods and waters thereof sing,
Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring,
And the night and days.

Yea, and cold and heat,
And the sun and stars and moon,
Sea with her monotonous tune,
Rain and hail and sleet,

And the winds of heaven,
And the solemn hills of blue,
And the brown earth and the dew,
And the thunder even,

And the flowers' sweet breath.
All things make one glorious voice ;
Life with fleeting pains and joys,
And our brother, Death.

Little flowers of air,
With your feathers soft and sleek,
And your bright brown eyes and meek
He hath made you fair.

He hath taught to you
Skill to weave in tree and thatch
Nests where happy mothers hatch
Speckled eggs of blue.

And hath children given :
When the soft heads overbrim
The brown nests, then thank ye Him
In the clouds of heaven.

Also in your lives
Live His laws Who loveth you.
Husbands, be ye kind and true ;
Be home-keeping, wives—

Love not gossiping ;
Stay at home and keep the nest ;
Fly not here and there in quest
Of the newest thing.

Live as brethren live :
Love be in each heart and mouth ;
Be not envious, be not wroth,
Be not slow to give.

When ye build the nest,
Quarrel not o'er straw or wool ;
He who hath, be bountiful
To the neediest.

Be not puffed nor vain
Of your beauty or your worth,
Of your children or your birth,
Or the praise you gain.

Eat not greedily :
Sometimes for sweet mercy's sake
Worm or insect spare to take ;
Let it crawl or fly.

See ye sing not near
To our church on holy day,
Lest the human-folk should stray
From their prayers to hear.

Now depart in peace :
In God's name I bless each one ;
May your days be long i' the sun
And your joys increase.

And remember me,
Your poor brother Francis, who
Loves you, and gives thanks to you
For this courtesy.

Sometimes when ye sing,
Name my name, that He may take
Pity for the dear song's sake
On my shortcoming.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.

RECESSIONAL

A recessional hymn is one that is used after a ceremony—it is the sequel to a processional hymn. Rudyard Kipling, the soldier's poet, has written many an inspiring and inspiriting processional poem, but nothing finer than this poem, hymn, and prayer—this afterthought of a patriot. Surely, while unhappily there is war in the world, every patriot, every soldier, should have an afterthought like his

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

The tumult and the shouting dies ;
The captains and the kings depart ;
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

Far-called, our navies melt away ;
On dune and headland sinks the fire :
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre !
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Of lesser breeds without the Law—

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy people, Lord!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

THE SCRIBE

This beautiful poem, running through the very small and very large things in creation—small and large equally great—ends with the one certain mystery, "Thou, Lord, and I."

WHAT lovely things
Thy hand hath made,
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,
The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Stirs, and hastes on.

Though I should sit
By some tarn in Thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills

To write of Earth's wonders,
Its live willed things,
Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly ;
And still would remain
My wit to try—
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten—
Thou, Lord, and I.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE LISTENERS

This is the sense of multitude in solitude. The forsaken house to which the traveller returns is so full of memories that it seems to him full of spirits that hear him. The poem is strangely charged with the mystery of things guessed at, not known, and indistinctly feared.

“ Is there anybody there ? ” said the traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door ;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor :
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head :
And he smote upon the door again a second time ;
“ Is there anybody there ? ” he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller ;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill

Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the old house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men :
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark
stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky ;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head :—
“ Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,” he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still
house
From the one man left awake :
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE DONKEY

The poet seems to make the donkey even uglier—more impossible—than any child who has looked into his beautiful eyes can have found him. But that is to increase the surprise of the splendid triumph of the verses recalling Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem.

WHEN fishes flew and forests walked,
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moments when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born ;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will ;
Starve, scourge, deride me : I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools ! For I also had my hour ;
One far fierce hour and sweet :
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON.

SONG OF THE DOG "QUOODLE"

A delightful list of the things the dear dog wonderfully smells, and put into the kind of grammar that a dear dog would talk.

THEY haven't got no noses,
The fallen sons of Eve ;
Even the smell of roses
Is not what they supposes ;
But more than mind discloses
And more than men believe.

They haven't got no noses,
They cannot even tell
When door and darkness closes
The park a Jew encloses,
Where even the Law of Moses
Will let you steal a smell.

The brilliant smell of water,
The brave smell of a stone,
The smell of dew and thunder,
The old bones buried under,
Are things in which they blunder
And err, if left alone.

The wind from winter forests,
The scent of scentless flowers.
The breath of brides adorning,
The smell of snare and warning,
The smell of Sunday morning,
God gave to us for ours.

And Quoodle here discloses
All things that Quoodle can,
They haven't got no noses,
They haven't got no noses,
And goodness only knowses
The Noselessness of Man.

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON.

MUSIC

Many poets who wrote verse lovely in sound had no ear for music. And yet people speak and write of that lovely-sounding verse as "musical." It is not musical at all. The words proper to the several arts should be kept apart. Mr. Chesterton, who has one of the finest ears in the world for sound in poetry, tells us in this poem that he has none for music. But he sees the power of music in the face of one who *has* an ear for music, and wonderfully he gets that effect at splendid second-hand.

SOUNDING brass and tinkling cymbal,
He that made me sealed my ears,
And the pomp of gorgeous noises,
Waves of triumph, waves of tears,

Thundered empty round and past me,
Shattered, lost for evermore,
Ancient gold of pride and passion,
Wrecked like treasure on a shore.

But I saw her cheek and forehead
Change, as at a spoken word,
And I saw her head uplifted
Like a lily to the Lord.

Naught is lost, but all transmuted,
Ears are sealed, yet eyes have seen ;
Saw her smile (O soul, be worthy !),
Saw her tears (O heart, be clean !).

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON.

THE WINDMILL

Man has caught the wild river in his watermill and the wild wind in his windmill. Which do you like best ? for I am sure you like both. Whenever you go through a village that has a watermill in it, look at the fine, thick-walled old house that is sure to be by the mill-pool.

If you should bid me make a choice
'Twixt wind and water mill,
In spite of all the millpond's charms
I'd take those gleaming sweeping arms
High on a windy hill.

The miller stands before his door
And whistles for a breeze ;
And, when it comes, his sails go round
With such a mighty rushing sound
You think of heavy seas.

And if the wind declines to blow
The miller takes a nap
(Although he'd better spend an hour
In brushing at the dust and flour
That line his coat and cap.)

Now, if a water-mill were his,
Such rest he'd never know,
For round and round his crashing wheel,
His dashing, splashing, plashing wheel,
Unceasingly would go.

So, if you'd bid me make a choice
'Twixt wind and water mill,
In spite of all a millpond's charms,
I'd take those gleaming sweeping arms
High on the windy hill.

EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS.

FOR THE FALLEN

These grave lines sound as though they had cost tears, and our tears answer them. Nothing simpler could be written, and nothing greater.

WITH proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were
young,

Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds
uncounted,

They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow
old :

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades
again ;

They sit no more at familiar tables at home ;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time :
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known

As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our
darkness,

To the end, to the end, they remain.

LAURENCE BINYON.

THE TORCH OF LIFE

Vitai Lampada

This is the poem of perfect discipline, in play and war—
—of voluntary obedience, which is the noble perfection
of liberty.

THERE'S a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the match to win.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder spoke—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke :
The gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks :
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the school is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling, fling to the host behind—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

DOMINION

In this beautiful song of delight, notice the fine line in which birds "flash like darkling stars," and that other about "a coloured world." Phrases like these, rather than close descriptions, give the sense of poetry.

I WENT beneath the sunny sky
When all things bowed to June's desire,
The pansy with its steadfast eye,
The blue shells on the lupin spire.

The swelling fruit along the boughs,
The grass grown heady in the rain,
Dark roses fitted for the brows
Of queens great kings have sung in vain ;

My little cat with tiger bars,
Bright claws all hidden in content ;
Swift birds that flashed like darkling stars
Across the cloudy continent ;

The wiry-coated fellow curled
Stump-tailed upon the sunny flags ;
The bees that sacked a coloured world
Of treasure for their honey-bags.

And all these things seemed very glad,
The sun, the flowers, the birds on wing,
The jolly beasts, the furry-clad
Fat bees, the fruit, and everything.

But gladder than them all was I,
Who, being man, might gather up
The joy of all beneath the sky,
And add their treasures to my cup,

And travel every shining way,
And laugh with God in God's delight,
Create a world for every day,
And store a dream for every night.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

SHERWOOD

Of cheerful phantoms and fancies the poet has made a sounding song—note the freshness of his make-believe, also the very fine movement of the metre. The dance of the syllables never becomes too regular ; when a syllable is wanting, it is to bring about a stop that fills the line admirably—for instance, the pause in the sixth stanza after "Marian is waiting."

SHERWOOD in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake ?
Gray and ghostly shadows are gliding through the
brake ;
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the
morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy
horn.

Robin Hood is here again. All his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the
leaves,

Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June.
All the wings of fairy land were here beneath the
moon,
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter
gold ;
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting
spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle
boughs.
Love is in the greenwood. Dawn is in the skies ;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark ! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden
steep.
Marian is waiting. Is Robin Hood asleep ?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down
together,
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and gray
goose-feather.
The dead are coming back again ; the years are
rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows.
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper
leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood
asleep ?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter
gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep ?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy
glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry
men ;
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through
the may
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day ;

Calls them and they answer. From aisles of oak
and ash
Rings the *Follow ! Follow !* and the boughs begin
to crash ;

The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin
to fly ;
And through the crimson dawning the robber
band goes by.

Robin ! Robin ! Robin ! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the
leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.
ALFRED NOYES.

THE FROG

How can we repay the witty pen that gives us such
perfect fun ? *The Frog* and *The Vulture* are excellent,
and *The Gnu* is a little masterpiece. I only hope the
young reader will like him as much as I do.

BE kind and tender to the Frog,
And do not call him names,
As "Slimy-skin," or "Polly-wog,"
Or likewise "Uncle James,"
Or "Gape-a-grin," or "Toad-gone-wrong,
Or "Billy-Bandy Knees" ;
The frog is justly sensitive
To epithets like these.

No animal will more repay
A treatment kind and fair,
At least so lonely people say
Who keep a frog (and by the way,
They are extremely rare).

HILAIRE BELLOC.

THE VUI TURE

The Vulture eats between his meals,
And that's the reason why
He very, very rarely feels
As well as you or I.
His eye is dull, his head is bald,
His neck is growing thinner.
Oh, what a lesson for us all
To only eat at dinner.

HILAIRE BELLOC.

THE GNU

G STANDS for Gnu, whose weapons of defence
Are long, sharp, curling horns, and common-sense.
To these he adds a name so short and strong,
That even hardy Boers pronounce it wrong.
How often on a bright autumnal day
The pious people of Pretoria say
"Come, let us hunt the——" Then no more is
heard,
But sounds of strong men struggling with a word ;
Meanwhile the distant Gnu with grateful eyes
Observes his opportunity and flies.

HILAIRE BELLOC.

FOUR-PAWS

A poem full of fun and sweetness, and the love of cat and kitten, shown in observation of the "bracelets" on both fore-legs, also the dark line outwards from the corner of each eye—beauties of the tabby.

FOUR-PAWS, the kitten from the farm,
Is come to live with Betsey-Jane,
Leaving the stack-yard for the warm
Flower-compassed cottage in the lane,
To wash his idle face and play
Among chintz cushions all the day.

Under the shadow of her hair
He lies, who loves him nor desists
To praise his whiskers and compare
The Tabby bracelets on his wrists—
Omelet at lunch and milk at tea
Suit Betsey-Jane and so fares he.

Happy beneath her golden hand
He purrs contentedly nor hears
His mother mourning through the land,
The old gray cat with tattered ears
And humble tail and heavy paw
Who brought him up among the straw.

Never by day she ventures nigh,
But when the dusk grows dim and deep
And moths flit out of the strange sky
And Betsey has been long asleep—
Out of the dark she comes and brings
Her dark maternal offerings ;—

Some field-mouse or a throistle caught
Near netted fruit or in the corn,
Or rat, for this her darling sought
In the old barn where he was born ;
And all lest on his dainty bed
Four-Paws were faint or under-fed.

Only between the twilight hours
Under the window-panes she walks
Shrewdly among the scented flowers
Nor snaps the soft nasturtium stalks,
Uttering still her plaintive cries,
And Four-Paws, from the house, replies,

Leaps from his cushion to the floor,
Down the brick passage scantily lit,
Waits wailing at the outer door
Till one arise and open it—
Then from the swinging lantern's light
Runs to his mother in the night.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.

TO MY DAUGHTER

WHO TELLS ME SHE CAN DRESS HERSELF

Betsey Jane who loved "Four Paws," has had her frocks from her nurse and her spiritual dress from her mother. According to the teaching of St. Paul, we have all to wear armour—the "Pauline arms"—against all that is wrong in ourselves and in the world. St. Peter of the Keys keeps the gate of Heaven.

So, dear, have you and Nurse conspired
In secret, and all eyes evaded,
Till you can boast yourself attired
Unwatched, uncounselled, and unaided.

Perfect in button, tape, and hook,
You've learned the knack, you come to tell us,
And while you turn that we may look
I own I am a little jealous.

That she has taught you with success
How to assume your frock and shed it,
That you have learnt the art to dress,
And Abigail's is all the credit.

Yet my devotion has its will,
Nor can I lightly yield to Nurse all
The praise, for I have prompted still
A spiritual dress rehearsal;

On your soft hair a helmet placed,
Fastened your breastplate like a bib on,
And tied the Truth about your waist
Where she is proud to tie your ribbon.

Each has her task, decorous, sweet,
Fair, to surpass your friends, she made you,
While for your hidden foes' defeat
I in your Pauline arms arrayed you.

Yet, though the clasps endure, I know
I'll wish our handiwork were neater
When at celestial gates you show
The well-known harness to St. Peter.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.

THE SHIP

The patient bravery of a ship that has not been fighting, nor making money by commerce but has been through trouble and makes no boast of it.

THERE was no song nor shout of joy
Nor beam of moon or sun,
When she came back from the voyage
Long ago begun ;
But twilight on the waters
Was quiet and gray,
And she glided steady, steady and pensive,
Over the open bay.

Her sails were brown and ragged,
And her crew hollow-eyed,
But their silent lips spoke content
And their shoulders pride ;
Though she had no captives on her deck,
And in her hold
There were no heaps of corn or timber
Or silks or gold.

JOHN COLLINS SQUIRE.

SLEEPING SEA

Note the effect of silence that words can give. In the long lines of the metre I feel the motion—hardly motion—of a silently rising tide, and in the short lines the little pause before another long soft advance.

THE Sea
Was even as a little child that sleeps
And keeps
All night its great unconsciousness of day.
No spray
Flashed when the wave rose, drooped, and slowly
 drew away.
No sound
From all the slumbering, full-bosomed water
 came ;
The Sea
Lay mute in childlike sleep, the moon was as a
 candle-flame.
No sound
Save when a faint and mothlike air fluttered
 around.
No sound
But as a child that dreams, and in his full sleep
 cries,
So turned the sleeping Sea and heaved her bosom
 of slow sighs.

JOHN FREEMAN.

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

There is hardship for animals that cannot be helped—it is part of the laws of nature. But man, who knows right from wrong, will certainly one day cease to take pleasure in “performing” animals, and in coursing hares; and means will be found to save pit-ponies from the darkness of the mine and of their blindness.

'TWOULD ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers,
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched blind pit-ponies,
And little hunted hares.

RALPH HODGSON.

STUPIDITY STREET

The birds eat the worm and guard the wheat; and the wheat is the staff of man's life. "Stupidity Street" is not a street common in English towns, happily. In Italy no great dinner is complete without a dish of small birds. We, at any rate, have a good angry poet to tell us of our folly.

I SAW with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

RALPH HODGSON.

FOREFATHERS

It is good to read manly and tender words of respect for the unknown villagers who did their work and went to their rest leaving no name or record. We inherit their good building, their thick walls, their steady roofs, and the example of their duty and dignity, without knowing to whom we are in debt.

HERE they went with smock and crook,
Toiled in the sun, lolled in the shade,
Here they mudded out the brook
And here their hatchet cleared the glade.
Harvest-supper woke their wit,
Huntsman's moon their wooings lit.

From this church they led their brides,
From this church themselves were led
Shoulder-high ; on these waysides
Sat to take their beer and bread.
Names are gone—what men they were
These their cottages declare.

Names are vanished, save the few
In the old brown Bible scrawled ;
These were men of pith and thew,
Whom the city never called ;
Scarce could read or hold a quill,
Built the barn, the forge, the mill.

On the green they watched their sons
Playing till too dark to see,
As their fathers watched them once,
As my father once watched me ;

While the bat and beetle flew
On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unrecorded, unrenowned,
Men from whom my ways begin,
Here I know you by your ground
But I know you not within—
All is mist, and there survives
Not a moment of your lives.

Like the bee that now is blown
Honey-heavy on my hand,
From the toppling tansy-throne
In the green tempestuous land--
I'm in clover now, nor know
Who made honey long ago.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

THE SHEPHERDESS

The maker of this Anthology, Mrs. Meynell, died before the book's issue ; and the Publishers may therefore add to her selection a poem of her own. Mrs. Meynell's qualifications for her task included a deep sense of the importance of first impressions upon the future of a child. "Giving the bud, I give the flower," is a line of hers which enshrines the responsibility of youth to its own maturity.

SHE walks, the lady of my delight,
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white ;
She guards them from the steep ;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right ;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

ALICE MEYNELL.

A HYMN

O GOD of earth and altar,
Bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people drift and die ;
The walls of gold entomb us,
The swords of scorn divide,
Take not thy thunder from us,
But take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches,
From lies of tongue and pen,
From all the easy speeches
That comfort cruel men,
From sale and profanation
Of honour and the sword,
From sleep and from damnation.
Deliver us, good Lord !

Tie in a living tether
The prince and priest and thrall,
Bind all our lives together,
Smite us and save us all ;
In ire and exaltation
Aflame with faith, and free,
Lift up a living nation,
A single sword to thee.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

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